City of Cape May Historic Preservation Commission 2026 Alignment Workshop #1

Thursday 26 February, 10:00-2:00 . . . @ City Hall Auditorium

Workshop Purpose

To align around and prioritize issues and activities for HPC's efforts in 2026-2027,

In a way that encourages all commission members to serve as valued co-creators who inspire and unite our community to steward Cape May's historical, cultural, and natural resources for the benefit of all,

So that present and future generations continue to express the unique quality of life we share in this place we love.

Workshop Products / Targeted Outcomes

Functional

Identify and clarify priorities for HPC's activities during 2026-2027 associated with the following:

1. Local Historic District Amendment
2. Property Reports
3. Revised Bylaws
4. Community Engagement
5. Historic Preservation Awards
6. Modifications to HPC Design Standards and Applications
7. Enforcement and Coordination with City Government
8. HPC Public Meeting Protocols and Preparation
9. Training
10. Other Potential 2026-2027 HPC activities

Being (The nature of the Energies and Spirit We Seek to Generate)

1. Understand, with humility, our primary duty as helpful public servants.

2. Grow and inspire our collective communal spirit in service to honoring, sustaining, and harmonizing our unique ecological and built environments in this special place.

3. Genuinely develop a caring interface with all community stakeholders that elevates the effectiveness of HPC through education, outreach, and open communication.

Will (The Governing and Determining Force Behind Our Function and Being)

1. Build HPC's capacity to ensure that Cape May continues to thrive and evolve its vitality as a living, breathing, evolving, nurturing place that expresses its authentic essence indefinitely.

Agenda: 26 February 2026 . . . 10:00 – 2:00

9:45 Arrival time

10:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks: Why are we here and what are we caring about?

- Open with Context Question and Exercise

10:10 Local Historic District Amendment Overview and Status – focus of next Alignment Workshop?

- Kevin, Judy, and JB as a Task Force to work on this effort
- Align first at HPC level around an expanded (contiguous) LHD that is feasible, clear, and accurate using a rigorously transparent process to also answer questions from those affected
    - Explain in letter/presentations that we slowed down the process to address concerns (and errors) from last year's efforts
    - Streetscape issues need to be considered and preserved
    - Do background work and engage/collaborate with Planning, Zoning, and City Council prior to public meeting
- Review Awards Jurors' comments to inform how we determine appropriate boundaries
- Research history of LHD boundaries from 1962 to current map
    - JB to meet w/ Craig Hurless to find data for current 8/1/2016 Zoning Map
    - Verify match w/ 11/22/2007 (Zoning) and 7/1/2006 (HP) Remington maps
- Clarify revised boundaries and map
    - Revise to include missing block 1098
    - Revise to include beach side of Promenade to high water line
    - Revise to include individually designated properties outside boundary
    - Clarify Spicer's Creek, Cape May Marina, and Roseman's Marina
    - JB to meet w/ Paul to verify list of all properties – review and cross-reference with tax assessment maps
    - Produce final list of all properties for inclusion
- HPC resolution approving revised LHD map – target June or July HPC meeting?
    - Target August or September for presentation to City Council
- Identify date for next Special Public Meeting
- Prepare for next Special Public Meeting – target late May or early June 2026?
    - Perhaps preview of map at Open House on 20 May (see below)
    - Send revised Notice of Amendment (and cover letters) to affected property owners
    - Send letters to prior property owners who were notified in error for inclusion
    - Prepare and submit to City the agenda for this meeting for publication
    - Publish Legal Notice for LHD map amendment Public Meeting (14 days prior?)
    - Publish Press Release for LHD Map Special Public Meeting
    - JB to create PPT and send out to HPC for review/comment

10:30 Property Reports

- JB and Judy meeting to identify/prioritize how many surveys needed (approx.120-150) to be completed in 2026
    - Those needed for HD map amendment (e.g., Spicers Creek)
        - Cross-reference the latest 2021 surveys for those to be included in the amended LHD
    - Older surveys that need to be updated
- Set up a constant, sustainable process for funding and updating Property Reports
    - Maintain a rolling database of properties needing updates
- Establish and reconcile budget with Paul for updating/adding Property Reports accordingly
    - Write RFP for soliciting survey services from Steven Smolyn, plus two others
        - City has agreed to funding this first round in 2026
        - Paul will write draft RFP
    - Write grant proposal for second round in 2027 – perhaps include surveys for areas/block-by-block surveys (e.g., Village Green)
        - Request using City Grant-writer to draft this RFP in the Fall of 2026
- Consider creating searchable (by address) database for online access to property reports
- Review Awards Jurors' comments to seek consistent criteria for determining contributing status

- JB to explore with Andrea at SHPO if restored (and/or rehabilitated) non-contributing properties can be upgraded to contributing via updated surveys and what would be required
- Janice will send JB a link to NAPC webinar on Standards from last year

10:45 Revise Bylaws
- Jim to revisit revisions in Word file from 18 March 2025: Aim to complete this by end of 2026
    - Jim will send JB & CGS a revised draft in March for review
    - Proposed revisions to be sent to Commission for review
    - HPC to approve as an internal document
    - Maintain electronic file of evolving file in HPC Secretary's files for internal housekeeping
- Outline process for updating Bylaws

10:55 Community Engagement Committee
- Report on status of activities – Jake
    - 2026 activities for 50th anniversary of Cape May's Historic Landmark Designation
    - Other events/educational seminars to encourage/assist preservation efforts.
        - Design Awards program – see below
        - Social media and web presence
        - Plaques and pedestrian level cues to induce inquiry, positive action
        - Propose sign announcing entry into Historic District (email from Andrea)
    - Engage Architects, Builders, Trades, Realtors
        - Develop incentives for these key partners to learn and employ sensitive treatment of historic buildings
    - Discuss programs at Tech School for developing related skills courses (e.g., window restoration, etc.)
        - Perhaps propose instructor (such as John Hassey, Bob Gleeson, Jim Barnes)
        - Consider offering internships with local craftsmen/historic Contractors
        - Develop program for mentorship for students
    - Produce and distribute existing brochures/handout materials for real estate offices, building supply businesses, etc. available from Lauren
- City Open House 20 May from 5-7 at Convention Hall
    - JB and Tom will sit at table to field questions
    - Perhaps bring proposed new map for folks to discuss (soft preview) prior to LHD Public Meeting

11:15 Historic Preservation Awards
- Report on results and status of 2026 Awards Program – Janice
    - JB/Janice/Jake composing draft letters to winners, commendation recipients, and nominees and then send to recipients as invitations to them (and their team) to the Awards Reception
    - Janice has created a summary report of results with jurors' comments for distribution to entire Commission
    - Announcement of winners held until Awards Reception
- Agreed to create and award a fifth category by splitting original Category 1 into Preservation/Restoration and Rehabilitation/Reconstruction
- Updates on 13 May Awards Reception at The Chalfonte
    - Cheese and crackers provided; wine and cash bar for purchase
    - Include introductory remarks from Zack and introductory remarks from JB
    - inspirational introduction by Tom Carroll
    - Banners given to winners to display at their properties
    - Brochure being produced for Reception
- Status of Leadership and Stewardship Awards

- These two awards intended to be annually
- Agreed that there can be more than one winner
- Nominees have indicated their willingness to be nominated
- Applications due on 31 March
- JB to turn nomination applications into blind submissions by eliminating nominator (from cover sheet)
- Selection committee meeting on 17 April for final selection

- Lessons Learned from 2026 process
  - Debrief of Jurors' comments that can inform HPC's future work
    - Avoid creating a false sense of history (Disneyland effect)
    - Avoid a false sense of history by imposing characteristics or other alterations (e.g., moving windows) that do not conform with Secretary of Interior's Standards on page 13
    - Appropriateness for specific property (e.g., sawn balusters, gingerbread)
    - Appropriate scale consistent with existing streetscape rhythm
    - How to address height issues (e.g., raising homes) to maintain connection with the street
    - Appropriateness of color palette
    - Avoid inappropriate fenestration (e.g., sliding glass doors, lack of mullions)
    - More documentation of historical research justifying design elements

12:00 Break to grab food for Working Lunch (and bio-break)

12:15 Areas for Potential Modifications to Standards and Applications

- Revise Period of Significance (1750-1948)
  - Amendment to Historic Status document pertaining to African American contributions has already been approved for 1948 (desegregation legislation and immediate post-war lack of much new technology until mid-1950's)
  - Must understand the impact of 1948 date relative to new LHD map
  - Agreed to await until after map amendment to propose this change due to need for accurate data from research to determine extent of impact
  - Identify process for making this revision
- Need to explore modifying current flood mitigation page to limit first floor elevation height to prevent manipulation to gain more height.
  - Paul D. requested a written HPC policy for raising floor heights of contributing historic structures and additions; for example, would HPC want to consider:
    - limiting raising finish floor elevations to a maximum of 2 feet above BFE?
    - stipulate that raising finish floor elevations for contributing properties (rehab/reno/addition projects) would not be required if this would jeopardize contributing status (deviation due to City Ordinance Section 258-7b)?.
    - deviating from minimum NJ floor elevation requirements in force on the date of application (e.g., 5 feet above BFE) for new construction within the entire Historic District since this height may be inappropriate due to streetscape?
    - include in HPC resolutions for such germane projects language justifying above deviations from the City or NJ regulations.
- Window replacements for Contributing Properties
  - No need to revise current language for repair vs. replacement
    - No need to mandate repair unless historically unique, distinctive, or specifically cited as a character-defining element
  - For informational purposes, create a non-exclusive list of HPC approved manufacturers: e.g., Jeld-Wen, Marvin, Sierra Pacific and naming the specific appropriate product lines from these companies

- Jim will review current application materials for clarity (e.g., window replacement submission requirements, delete roofing page) and propose draft revisions
    - Agreed to modify Standards to codify recent shift in appropriate materials for roof replacement
    - Agreed to modify Standards to appropriate synthetic wood roof shingles with submission of approved sample/manufacturer
- The board discussed whether further amendments to the standards would be beneficial as it relates to pools in the Historic District:
    - Not located in front or side yards
    - Properly screened by appropriate permanent screening (including opaque fences, walls, landscaping, or vegetation with permanent maintenance covenants) so as not visible at eye-height from any public right-of-way
    - HPC will coordinate with Planning Board regarding regulations associated with pools, since main provisions for pools are a City issue
    - Must be careful to continue assessing appropriateness pools by using current Standards until any new Standards are confirmed adopted.
- Three primary issues were identified as areas of potential tension with other applicable regulations and will continue to require careful consideration:
    - Height
    - Flood mitigation
    - Parking
- Agreed to discuss the following at the 16 March HPC Meeting during Discussion period:
    - PV solar panel visibility
    - Flood mitigation/raising of contributing structures issues from Paul below
    - The HPC Solicitor summarized the procedure for any amendment to the Historic Design Standards which follows the same process as any other development ordinance. After initiation of a recommendation by the HPC, the proposed amendment will require Master Plan Consistency review by the Planning Board and then adoption of the amendment by ordinance of City Council.

2:25 HPC Public Meeting Protocols and Preparation

- Proper preparation for HPC meetings by all Commissioners
- Process for providing Review Committee synopsis to full Commission
- Avoiding “side-bars” and ex parte discussions regarding pending applications – CGS
    - Announce at meetings that no such discussions should be held about applications during breaks

The meeting adjourned at 2:35

26 FEBRUARY MEETING ENDED HERE

Items for discussion at 2026 Alignment Workshop #3 (July?)

1. Additional Modifications to Standards and Applications
    - Clarify visibility definitions (page 12) and appropriate screening methods for various conditions
    - Address artificial turf
    - Clarify issues associated with use of vinyl and textured (wood grain) vinyl siding
    - New construction – clarify requirements for replacement structures “fit” with historical context?
        - Scale issues
        - False sense of history
    - Clarifications for accessory and “Bolt-on” structures (sheds, showers, etc.)

- Criteria for allowing parking beneath structures
- Further clarification of signage Standards
- Address extent to which HPC should regulate color palates
    - Permitted by ordinance
    - Any specific colors to prohibit?
- Process for making revisions to the Standards
- Consider including a copy of the Standards with all applications, incorporate cost into fee?

2. Enforcement and Coordination with City Government
    - Zoning amendment requiring at real estate closings for locations within Historic District – CGS
    - Zoning amendment to address Demolition by Neglect issues – CGS
        - Clarify HPC's role in identifying neglected properties
    - Produce 2025 CLG Annual Report and submit to NJHPO by 31 March
    - Revise Master Plan to update Section 7.0 "Historical Element"
    - Uniform City Signage Standards (Task Force meeting on 24 February) – CGS, Kevin, JB
    - Uniform streetlights model to encourage more gas exterior lighting and gas street lights
    - Process for reporting violations of HPC approvals (monthly report by the compliance officer?)
    - The Automobile: Reduce the visual impact of trucks, autos in district; enforce limits
    - Scofflaws: When properties change hands, inspect & refuse COA for unpermitted work
    - HPC member on the Planning Board/ Master Plan Committee (as recommended by NAPC)
    - HPC representative on Environmental Commission
    - Potentially post notifications of applicant properties
    - Explore HPC's recommendations associated with zoning issues to be addressed/considered by Planning's efforts with Masterplan 2029 re-adoption
        - Massing, streetscape, flood mitigation height

3. Training
    - Arrange 2-hour CLG training for HPC on Zoom with Andrea Tingey (June?)
    - Coordinate with MAC (Janet) 1.5-2 hour course similar to those for tour guides
        - Tour of African American properties for HPC?

4. Other Potential 2025-2026 HPC activities:
    - Consider identifying a Consultant for HPC to address tough calls?
    - Resolution to recognize African American contribution: suggest to PB for City Council approval at local level
        - Task Force for African American contributions tribute to celebrate amendment
            - Perhaps have City Council ask HPC to do this
    - Propose Carolyn Pitts Memorial at Physick Estate?
    - Consider City tax deduction for significant historical renovations as a gesture
    - Stephen Smith House status: Discuss with Paul
    - Committee for creating a Preservation Plan – perhaps defer to next HPC Alignment Workshop
        - Get copy of prior Plan from 1991
        - Identify Purpose, Targeted Outcomes, and Process for creating such a Plan
        - Identify and resolve issues of scale, streetscape, etc. to guide HPC decisions
        - Follow up on the removal of contributing status on applicable properties, and consideration of restoration of said status on certain culturally important properties
        - Address Streetscape issues
        - Address on the future of Village Green and it's potential for eventual inclusion in the Local Historic District (as an example of a Levittown-type planned community)
        - Create publishable document of Plan for posting

Next Steps

- 2026 Workshop #2 – early May?
    - Focus on preparation for Historic District Amendment Public Meeting
    - Consider/discuss Preservation Plan
- 2026 Workshop #3 – early July?
    - Focus on Modifications to HPC Design Standards and Applications