

BOROUGH OF CAPE MAY POINT – HPC Subcommittee Report

May 20, 2020

Due to concerns expressed by the community relevant to the loss of historic properties in Cape May Point, and at the request of Council, a subcommittee of the Planning Board was formed to review historic preservation in regards to previous efforts, commission requirements and process, and its applicability to this borough.

The subcommittee reports the following findings:

1. Past efforts to create historic preservation ordinances or a commission have not been successful.
2. The community has expressed concern regarding the loss of "historic properties" in Cape May Point and formalizing processes to prevent further loss. Recent demolitions have caused concern regarding the current demolition process.
3. Like and in-kind borough's and towns in the State of New Jersey have made historic preservation efforts. Some have been successful, some not. Examples are provided.
4. The 2016 Cape May Point Circuit Rider, available in the Historic Preservation Element section of the Master Plan) does identify approximately 193 properties in the borough that could qualify as "historic", depending on adopted parameters.
5. In January a presentation was given by Mr. Jonathan Kinney, Historic Preservation Specialist with NJDEP (<https://www.capemaypoint.org/community/borough-news/101-historic-preservation>) where we learned:

1. Property owners always have the right to demolish their home regardless of HPC designation.
2. Historic preservation ordinances does not guarantee that the property will remain in its current location or within the borough.
3. The Historic Preservation Commission must be formalized before historic preservation ordinances regarding historic designation or demolition delay can be implemented.

Suggested Action:

We propose that all data collected by the subcommittee, and subsequently the Planning Board, be provided to the governing body so they can determine public support for continuing the historic preservation effort.