

Record Observer

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

War of 1812 has bearing on 2010 land development

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CENTREVILLE The Queen Anne's County Planning Commission was asked to keep the history of the War of 1812 in mind when they review land development and subdivision plans in the county.

During their meeting on Dec. 15, planning commission members got an update from Mary Margaret Revell Goodwin on her research into Queen Anne's County's role in the War of 1812. Goodwin, a historian from Centreville, is chairman of the county's War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee. She's also a member of the program and events advisory committee for the state's War of 1812 Bicentennial Committee.

The British used Kent Island as a base of operations in the war, and took over four major estates on the island, said Goodwin. She said the British, starting in April 1813, began harassing the Eastern Shore, starting with Poplar Island and Tilghman Island. The area of Kent Island where Gibson's Grant and Chester Haven Beach are located between Macum Creek, the Chester River and Piney Creek had a town called Sharktown that existed until about the 1850s. Goodwin said about 2,000 British Marines camped on what's now the Chester Haven Beach property during the War of 1812. The property, which could be the site of a residential development project, should be examined for evidence of the British encampment, said Goodwin.

"We need to absolutely do an archeological survey of that property," she said.

Goodwin has spent many hours doing research on Eastern Shore connections to the War of 1812. Her work has involved trying to find the location of the original road between Kent Island and Queenstown. British and American forces fought at Slippery Hill, located on that road, in August 1813.

During her presentation, Goodwin showed photos, including a Civil War-era photo of Slippery Hill farm. There's a road beside a fence in front of the farm. A modern day photo shows a sunken area in the woods, not far from the Slippery Hill battle marker near state Route 18 (Main Street) and Bennett Point Road. That might be the site of the battle, but it can't be confirmed. The sunken area goes at an angle to Route 18.

Goodman said what's known for sure is Slippery Hill is two miles from Queenstown; the Americans' 38th Regiment was at Queenstown from Aug. 5-25, 1813; and there was a single road between Kent Island and Queenstown until 1905.

Goodman has spent many hours at the Maryland State Archives building in Annapolis, looking at every road record available from the 1800s to current times, trying to find the location of the Kent Island to Queenstown road.

"Literally, it is document by document by document. It's extremely difficult," Goodwin said.