

HEARING ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

September 15, 2006 - On September 20, the House of Representatives Government Reform Committee Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census will hold a hearing on "Historic Preservation and Community Development: Why Cities and Towns Should Look to the Past as a Key to Their Future." Members of the nonprofit preservation community, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation's President Richard Moe and Director of Community Partners at John Leith-Tetrault, Cleveland Restoration Society Executive Director Kathleen Crowther, and Preservation North Carolina Executive Director J. Myrick Howard will provide testimony, as well as Rhode Island's Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Ted Sanderson and representatives from federal government, including Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, John Nau and Associate Director, Cultural Resources, National Park Service Jan Matthews.

Hearings such as this one are opportunities for Congress to gather information on topics of interest. Hearings within the Government Reform Committee and its subcommittees cover a broad spectrum of topics that have impact government-wide. The committee can produce legislation or make recommendations to other committees for changes or legislation.

Kathleen Crowther, Executive Director of the Cleveland Restoration Society was instrumental in getting this hearing off the ground. Preservation Action spoke with Kathleen about her role -- a great example of why its good to cultivate a relationship with your elected officials.

Kathleen noted, "I was in at the right time. (Representative Michael) Turner (R-OH) had asked me to come in and talk to him so I took him up on that. I made an appointment and visited his office last June when I was in town for something else. I brought one of my show-and-tell pieces and told him about what we do --loans for housing stock in Cleveland, and we're very involved in redevelopment. I showed him our stuff -- he got excited about it. He really lit up when I talked about our CDBG grants (Note: Turner has called hearings on the future of CDBG and has been a great supporter of that program) . Next thing you know he says he wanted to have a hearing about this. He brought in his chief of staff. I wondered 'what does this mean' and he gave me the proceedings from the Katrina hearing (Note: this hearing took place last November in the same subcommittee as the pending hearing thanks to Rep. Turner). I emailed a conceptual idea about the hearing -- people don't know the role that preservation plays in community redevelopment. They took my recommendations to heart and added two panelists. We convened a couple of strategy conferences (with the National Trust). Turner kept asking "what can the federal government do for you?" That was one of the benefits of my presence there -- I wasn't asking him for something. I was simply making a courtesy call."