

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
TOWN HALL
JUNE 5, 2013
WEDNESDAY 2 PM



Those present:

Chairman Henry Foy
Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher
Nikki Owens
Shawn Leatherwood
Peter Sterling
Sandra Owen

Also present:

Town Planner Paul Benson
Secretary Ginny Boyer

Absent: Ann Melton

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes, May 22, 2013

Bette Sprecher made a motion to accept the special meeting minutes of May 22 with one correction: Ann Melton was *not* present at the May 22 meeting. Peter Sterling seconded approving the minutes with the correction. All were in favor.

Review of Thomason & Associates Draft Guidelines

Peter Sterling felt that *recommended* rather than *encouraged* should be used throughout the design guidelines. **Vice-Chairman Sprecher made a motion to use *recommended* instead of *encouraged* consistently throughout the document. Shawn Leatherwood seconded and all were in favor.**

Mr. Sterling posed the question to the Commission, *How is the Town better off with these recommendations?* which was met with such accolades for Thomason & Associates draft guidelines that although no action was taken and no motions made, discussion was as follows:

Peter Sterling praised the ability of the recommendations to serve as coherency among commission members and the availability of the documents for public use. Mr. Sterling was impressed by how best practices are discussed, but Western North Carolina in particular.

Nikki Owens agreed that the document will be most helpful once it gets in the hands of home and business owners for educational purposes.

Shawn Leatherwood appreciates the document's use for developing awareness and encouraging citizens. Mr. Leatherwood said this is the right thing to do until we have more authority as a commission.

Chairman Foy mentioned that of all the grants the Commission has had, "this is far and away the best of the results I've seen. We are really getting our money's worth".

Vice-Chairman Sprecher is glad to see something specific to go by, to have things "spelled out at last".

Shawn Leatherwood mentioned what is good about the document is it illustrates the pros and not just the cons of following the guidelines. In his profession there are a lot of misnomers in regard to costs—for example, most people think vinyl siding will save money, but this document educates those considering the use of vinyl siding as being a possible detriment to the structure, and therefore may be a costly alternative.

Sandra Owen mentioned the document's being not just guidelines but how to do certain things—pages that can be copied and distributed to the public.

Chairman Foy feels confident everyone in the historic districts will be proud of the design review guidelines and help the commission carry out what they recommend.

Peter Sterling called the design review guidelines an invitation, opening the vista of what could be possible, a good basic document which encourages people to participate.

Shawn Leatherwood mentioned once having a mentor who said, "I can't red line a blank sheet of paper" meaning if you have nothing to show, it cannot be critiqued. This document offers guidance for the public and those in the preservation community.

Chairman Foy appreciates that now everyone on the commission will have opinions based on the same information.

Shawn Leatherwood feels that as people gain interest in preservation, the interest will continue to grow and lack of education will fade away.

Chairman Foy looks forward to having people apply to the Town at a time when Mr. Benson will have the design guidelines in hand. The commission will have this to review.

Shawn Leatherwood said that as a board, we'll have to discuss how we get designations and keep in mind it is not about quantity but quality. We're not Savannah, not Charleston. Not every house 50 years old is going to qualify. It is important to learn the guidelines and know where our line in the sand is going to be. Mr. Leatherwood is "tired of people coming asking for forgiveness rather than permission".

Sandra Owen feels the guidelines will encourage pride of ownership in older homes and buildings.

Bette Sprecher asked if Scott McLeod, editor of Smoky Mountain News, would consider printing articles about what we're doing. Caitlin Bowling, reporter from Smoky Mountain News, was present at the meeting to do just that. Nikki hopes the document could be used for several pieces, especially the introduction and intention section, to get people interested.

Peter Sterling mentioned his Preservation Sensitive, Preservation Savvy document from 2009. Ginny Boyer will make copies of this document for the commission's next meeting.

Upcoming Public Meeting/Regular HPC Meeting of July 3, 2013

There will be a public meeting/regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission on July 3, 2013. Those receiving invitations will be: property owners of national register listed homes and businesses; those in the Main Street, Frog Level and Spread Out National Historic districts; those in the Love Lane neighborhood (potential historic district) and those owners of local landmarks. Mr. Philip Thomason of Thomason & Associates will be available at this, the last opportunity to take comments from the public before the completion of Waynesville's Design Review Guidelines.

Rock Walls

The Historic Preservation Commission divided the Town of Waynesville into nine districts in 2007 for purposes of photographing and indexing the town's rock walls. Members want to review the stone wall project and may explore options of getting the stone walls designated in some way to avoid their being torn down.

Shawn Leatherwood said the commission has been "talking about" Green Hill Cemetery's rock wall repairs "for ten years". Mr. Leatherwood said the wall as a "state-owned piece of infrastructure" has no designation. Nikki Owens mentioned the possibility of having local districts which include the rock walls as part of the district. Ms. Owens is also concerned about losing the tree canopy along this section of street. Mr. Leatherwood mentioned designating homes with walls attached to them as a preservation tool. Joe Sam Queen's home, for instance, has the South Main Street rock wall alongside its driveway.

Paul Benson reported NC DOT is not proposing widening South Main Street in that [Green Hill Cemetery] section. Mr. Benson said according to DOT's traffic projections through 2035 widening was not warranted but DOT is responsible for maintenance. Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher asked the commission request NCDOT repair the wall.

Nikki Owens and Peter Sterling agreed to try to elevate the importance of the rock walls, at least talk to the Aldermen. Ms. Owens mentioned Ocracoke Island's cisterns have been designated landmarks. It would be worth consideration to have Waynesville's rock walls nominated and thereby protected. Mr. Sterling said the first step is to get the public to agree the walls are

important to the heritage of the town. Step two would be designation. Chairman Henry Foy said that is why photographs are needed. The “eye-minded” public needs to appreciate the photos and their history first. Mr. Benson agreed to see what rock wall information he has available for review which Peter Sterling remembered include both photographs and narrative.

Adjourn

With no further business, Vice-Chairman Sprecher made a motion to adjourn the meeting; this was seconded by Shawn Leatherwood. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Henry Foy, Chairman