

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JANUARY 5, 2005
WEDNESDAY - 2:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL

The Historic Preservation Commission held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2005. Members present were Marc Yops, Laura Soltis, Bob Breese, Bette Sprecher and Malinda Messer. Others present were Planning Director Paul Benson and Town Clerk Phyllis McClure. Chairman Bette Sprecher called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of November 3, 2004

Bob Breese moved, seconded by Marc Yops to approve the minutes with the following corrections:

1st page, last paragraph change Quilan to Quinlan

2nd page, 2nd paragraph add the word "already been done"

2nd page, 3rd paragraph change the word of to on.

The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation by Carol James - Historic Landmark Designation for Property Located at 19 Water Street

Carol James, President of the Frog Level Association, presented a request for local landmark designation of the property located at 19 Water Street. This property was donated to the Association by the Coffey family and they have indicated that they would like to see the house used as some type of museum or learning center. The house currently has a tax value of \$6,534. It was requested that the interior, exterior and the entire land area outside the footprints be included. Ms. James said it was felt that the restoration of this structure, one of the very early residences in Waynesville, would significantly enhance the area and promote continued restoration in the Frog Level National Historic District.

This property is situated on the corner of Depot and Water Streets along the bank of Richland Creek in the Frog Level community of Waynesville.

Ms. James said the building is of frame construction, typical of architectural design and materials used around the turn of the century. Based on the original footprint as noted in the 1972 Landmark Engineering Map of Waynesville, there appears to be few alterations to the original structure. According to Mr. Lyle Coffey, the roof, now tin, was originally cedar shake. There

was originally a long woodshed situated behind the residence which was primarily used for the firewood business operated by Mr. Joe Moore. The Association intends to reconstruct the woodshed using similar materials and design as that of the original woodshed.

It is believed that the house was constructed in the late 1800's or early 1900's. Joe and Oma Moore lived in the house from the 1920's into the 1940's. James Robert Moore, now age 70, grew up in the home. His grandparents were Joe and Oma Moore.

The home was used primarily as a private residence, and research indicates that it was used as a boarding house at one time. The home is included in the Frog Level Historic District as a contributing building. This district was declared a commercial or industrial district and this is the only structure within the district which was primarily a residence which is very unusual. It may also be the only one story Queen Anne style house in Waynesville.

The house has been inspected by Larry Clark of Clark and Leatherwood and Ron Fleenor, former member of the Historic Preservation Commission. Both have indicated that the house is worthy of preservation. Bruce Gagnon also felt that it could be restored. Estimated costs for restoration range from thirty-five thousand to fifty thousand dollars. These estimates include reconstruction of the woodshed and volunteer labor. A newly formed group, "Friends of the Frog", plans to coordinate and do a lot of the work. The Association plans to use existing material when possible or appropriate material where necessary.

There was some discussion regarding whether the shingles were shingle shake or tin originally. Paul Benson said he could get some guidance regarding the shingles from John Horton with the State.

Bob Breese moved, seconded by Marc Yops, to recommend that the application be sent to the State to begin the process for local landmark designation for the house and property located at 19 Water Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Bette Sprecher thanked Ms. James for her presentation, adding that it was presented in a very professional manner.

Bob Breese pointed out that in the 1930's the Corp of Engineers came out and repaired the creek beside this house because of the flooding. Carol James added that the Town of Waynesville built the dam in the 1970's and there has not been any significant flooding on this property since that time.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report

Paul Benson reported on the Fiscal Year 2004 Annual Report. The Historic Preservation Commission met four times during 2004. One structure, the Quinlan House, received local landmark designation. Work continues on the Main Street Historic District, which is currently on the Study List. A survey and planning grant was received and a contract was approved to hire Sybil Bowers to conduct this work. Copies of the report will be distributed to the Commission Members.

Report on Historic Rock Walls

Paul Benson said there are three historic rock walls in Waynesville as follows:

- 1) Along South Main Street this rock wall is owned by the NC Department of Transportation and it is their responsibility to maintain. Several years ago, former Planner Andrew Powell worked with the State, and with the help of inmates from the Department of Corrections repairs were made to the walls. Those repairs have not held up well and further work is needed. Bette Sprecher asked if a letter could be written to the NC Department of Transportation regarding this rock wall.
- 2) Another rock wall is located along the property owned by the U. S. Post Office and is listed on the National Register. They would be responsible for repairs and funds would need to be spent appropriately since they are federal funds.
- 3) The last rock wall is located at the corner of Boyd Avenue and Smathers Street. This rock wall is privately owned by Richard and Virginia Boyer, owners of the Smathers House which is listed on the National Register. Currently the Town's ordinances do not require maintenance in order that this type of landmark does not deteriorate to the point of falling down. Paul said there may be "bricks and mortar grants" available for this type of work.

It was the consensus of the Commission that Paul Benson investigate any possible grants available and write letters to all those property owners requesting that the rock walls be repaired and restored to their original condition.

NOTE: Malinda Messer had to leave the meeting at this time.

Review of Downtown Historic District Properties

The Commission discussed two of the properties on Main Street which are included in the study area of the historic district. The properties are located 128 and 132 North Main Street and recently received approval for renovations from the Community Appearance Commission as requested by Jonnie Cure'. Paul Benson said both buildings are listed as contributing buildings within this study area. The Commission was concerned that certain renovations could make the buildings become non contributing buildings.

Mib Medford, a member of the Community Appearance Commission, attended the meeting. She expressed concern that the item to renovate the two buildings on Main Street was placed on their agenda at the last minute which did not give the Commission members adequate time to review the request. There was a vote of four (4) to three (3) to approve the request. Ms. Medford expressed concerns at the meeting and tried to convince Jonnie Cure' to consider other alternatives in renovations to the buildings in order to maintain the historic character of the downtown area but was unsuccessful. Laura Soltis pointed out that the Community Appearance Commission can make recommendations but cannot stop projects. Paul Benson added that the Town cannot stop projects which meet all the Town's regulatory requirements.

Mib Medford said John Horton indicated that this was one of the most historic buildings in the downtown area. She had a 1930 photograph of the building.

Marc Yops asked if the various commissions ever communicate with each other. He suggested that a letter be written to the Town Manager expressing these concerns. He added that there should be more of a coordinating effort and it should begin at Town Hall.

Bette Sprecher suggested that a letter be written to Jonnie Cure' expressing the concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the renovations to this building and the effects it could have on the downtown historic district.

There was also discussion that the Historic Preservation Commission should review changes proposed for any structures located within any type of historic district, regardless of whether the area currently has historic designation or is included in a study area.

NOTE: Malinda Messer rejoined the meeting at this time.

It was the consensus of the Commission that Paul Benson draft an amendment to the Town's Ordinances that allows the Historic Preservation Commission to review any changes proposed for historic properties rather than the Community Appearance Commission. This would allow some guidance for the property owners to maintain the historic integrity of the buildings. The drafted amendment is then to be placed on the Planning Board agenda as soon as possible for their recommendation and then to the Board of Aldermen for their consideration.

Training Opportunities for Historic Preservation Commission Members

Paul Benson said the Main Street Conference will be held January 24 - 26 in New Bern North Carolina. The Town will pay registration fees but members are responsible for lodging and other expenses. If anyone is interested in attending they were asked to contact Mr. Benson. Marc Yops said he may be able to use one of the cars from Western Carolina University for transportation.

Bette Sprecher suggested a joint meeting of the Community Appearance Commission and Historic Preservation Commission. Mib Medford suggested getting the person who wrote the Main Street Program to attend the meeting and make it a learning/training opportunity. It was also suggested that Sybil Bowers be invited to attend since she will be the person responsible for doing the study for the Main Street Historic District and that Ron Huelster, Downtown Waynesville Association Director also be invited.

Resignation of Bob Breese

Bob Breese announced that this is his last meeting. Mr. Breese has served on the Historic Preservation Commission for the past ten years. His term expires on January 31, 2005. Mr. Breese said he has enjoyed serving on this Commission. He is concerned about inaccuracies of the past and felt that the problem is the lack of documentation. This leads to inaccuracies which cause people to expand and exaggerate things. For example he pointed out that rumor has it that the Haywood County Courthouse burned and all records were destroyed. This is incorrect - it

was the Town Hall that burned in 1918. Mr. Breese encouraged the Commission to promote bringing the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad to Waynesville in the Frog Level area.

Discussion Regarding Open House for Historic Exhibit

Bette Sprecher said the Waynesville Historical Society held an open house in the mid 1990's at the old Bank Building on Main Street. Cider and cookies were served. People brought in old photographs. Mib Medford said a museum was needed to display the old photographs. Another Open House is being planned. The Haywood County Library was suggested, however it was pointed out that the Library is not set up to do this. The Haywood County Arts Council and HART buildings were also suggested but were not available. The Historical Society may ask the Town of Waynesville or Downtown Waynesville Association to sponsor the Open House.

Update on Williamson House

Paul Benson said a letter was received by the Town from Welch Construction that they are pulling off the job of restoring the Williamson house on Walnut Street. Mr. Welch could not get the Williamson family to follow through and he had no choice other than to pull off the job. Mr. Benson will talk with John Swift to see if anything further needs to be done at this time.

Adjournment

With no further business, Marc Yops moved, seconded by Laura Soltis to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Phyllis R. McClure
Town Clerk

Bette Hannah Sprecher
Chairman