

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APRIL 2, 2008
WEDNESDAY - 2:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL

The Historic Preservation Commission held a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2008. Members present were Malinda Messer, Nikki Owens, Sandra Owen, Bette Sprecher, David Felmet, Herbert Nelson, Bob Kearney and Shawn Leatherwood. Peter Sterling was absent; he was out of town. Also present were Planning Director Paul Benson and Town Clerk Phyllis McClure. Chairman Bette Sprecher called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of February 6 and March 5, 2008

David Felmet moved, seconded by Malinda Messer to correct the spelling of “Abbate” on the first page. David Felmet moved, seconded by Herbert Nelson, to approve the minutes of the February 6 and March 5, 2008 meetings as amended. Both motions carried unanimously.

Historic Properties Inventories

Bette Sprecher asked if photographs taken by former Town intern Amos Gilliam could be identified or if the HPC members could help identify the properties in the photographs. Paul Benson said this would be difficult and the photographs were outdated. He suggested that the Town get another intern, but this may not happen until the Police Department/Development Office renovations are complete. Bob Kearney expressed concern that some historic properties could fall into total disrepair during this time. He suggested that the HPC members divide the photographs and try to look at a few properties each month. Malinda Messer said she could take some new photographs with her digital camera. It was suggested that the properties be identified on a map divided into sections which can be assigned to each HPC member. Over the next six months to one year HPC members can begin the process of identifying these historic properties. Paul Benson said he could prepare maps for the HPC Members. Malinda Messer said once they have maps they can get additional information about the historic properties from Haywood County’s web site. Bob Kearney said Shawn Leatherwood could help determine if any of the historic houses are in danger.

Paul Benson said the inventory needs to be updated. Rather than spend a lot of time on the current inventory, the Town could apply for a grant next year. Since it is a high priority, funding is more likely, and if approved we could begin the project in about one year. The ultimate goal is to save these properties. Paul will prepare a map divided into sections, similar to the map used for historic rock walls, for the next meeting. Malinda Messer suggested that a query be done to obtain a list of properties that are over a certain age.

Malinda Messer moved, seconded by Nikki Owen, to do a query and add additional homes to the maps. Malinda Messer withdrew the motion. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Williamson House - Walnut Street

Bob Kearney presented a draft letter regarding the Williamson house on Walnut Street requesting that the Williamson family consider donating this house for historic purposes in order to preserve the house and provide an opportunity to protect the Williamson legacy. It was felt that this should be the first step in preserving the house. The letter should emphasize the heightened interest in Haywood County's history over the past several years. Bob will make some changes to the letter and present to Attorney Jack Kersten. Details could be worked out later.

Malinda Messer moved, seconded by Sandra Owen, to approve the draft letter with the addition to the first paragraph that "exciting things are underway and continue to build" or similar wording at Bob's discretion regarding the Williamson house. The motion carried unanimously. Sandra Owen added that this is a wonderful letter and expressed appreciation to Bob Kearney for undertaking this project.

Historic Properties Brochure Update

Bob Kearney presented a draft of the historic properties brochure, adding that the Mountaineer did a wonderful job. Photographs and historical information would be included for each home. Other properties could be added if space is available, but they would be outside the walking area. Bob has researched extensively information on action by the NC General Assembly, information included in "The Annals of Haywood County", and research done by Janet Webb regarding road building orders in 1811 and 1812. Ms. Webb makes references to Mt. Prospect in road construction orders during that time. There is also information about a burned cabin referred to as Mount Prospect. Bette Sprecher said she has a friend in Winston-Salem that is a descendent of Colonel Robert Love that says Mount Prospect was the name of the Town, not a home. She added that Bruce Briggs felt that when Allen wrote his book he refers to Mt. Prospect as a town. There were descendants living at that time that could have challenged it if the information was incorrect but they did not. Nikki Owens said the past is like exploring a foreign country. Sandra Owen and other commission members felt that controversial or unproven historical information should not be included in the brochure. Bob Kearney said he could leave out the sentence that there was never a town known as Mount Prospect. Bob Kearney felt that it was important that historical information be accurate. Malinda Messer said she would need to leave at 3:00 p.m. and requested to move to the next item and resume the discussion later.

Attendance

There was discussion regarding attendance requirements. Commission members felt that illness was an excused absence. However, if members could not attend meetings according to the requirements, it may be necessary to have them serve as honorary members rather than voting members. Some members are a valuable resource to the Commission and they wanted them to remain involved with the Commission. No action was taken, however, this issue may be discussed at a later time.

Grady Honeycutt Building - Depot Street

Bob Kearney said the historic name on the Town Ordinance designating the Grady Honeycutt Building on Depot Street as a local landmark may be historically inaccurate. This name was included in the report submitted by Carol James when the request for historic landmark designation

was being submitted. In 1916 the building was used as a grocery store by Messer/Carswell. The National Register refers to the building as the Carswell/Messer in the application for the Frog Level Historic District. Grady Honeycutt came along when the building was approximately thirty years old, owning the building from 1946 until 1965. It was felt that the name on the ordinance designating the Grady Honeycutt building on Depot Street should be the name of the original owner.

Shawn Leatherwood moved, seconded by Bob Kearney, to recommend to the Board of Aldermen that Ordinance No. 9-00 be amended to change the official name of the building from “Grady Honeycutt Building” to “Messer/Carswell Building” to reflect the name of the original owner. The motion carried unanimously.

Haywood County Bicentennial Celebration

Bette Sprecher said the Haywood County Bicentennial Committee plans to have a watermelon cutting on Friday, July 4. Volunteers will be needed to work during this time and she encouraged HPC Members to participate in this celebration.

Historic District - Spread Out

HPC Members expressed concern regarding the large amount of renovations taking place in the area historically referred to as “Spread Out”. This area is the location of Maple, Hazel, Cherry, Walnut, Beech and Parsley Streets and is in need for designation as a historic district. Shawn Leatherwood said he felt that people could be investing money in renovations and if they request historic designation may need to be turned down because the work being done doesn’t comply with the guidelines. Sandra Owen asked if a form letter could be written and mailed to property owners in this area along with the guidelines. Nikki Owen pointed out that when HPC members approached owners of historic rock walls they were very friendly and expressed interest in preserving these historic rock walls and it was felt that the homeowners in this area hopefully would feel the same. Sandra Owen and Nikki Owens will work together on these letters. Paul Benson will prepare a mailing list.

Herbert Nelson moved, seconded by Shawn Leatherwood to review a draft letter at the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

With no further business, Herbert Nelson moved, seconded by Shawn Leatherwood, to adjourn the meeting at 3:23 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Phyllis R. McClure
Town Clerk

Bette H. Sprecher
Chairman