

REGULAR MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
TOWN HALL
FEBRUARY 6, 2013
WEDNESDAY 2 PM



Waynesville's Historic Preservation Commission had a regular meeting on February 6, 2013. Those present: Chairman Nikki Owens, Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher, Shawn Leatherwood, Peter Sterling, Henry Foy and Sandra Owen. Also present: Town Planner Paul Benson and Administrative Assistant Ginny Boyer. Absent: Ann Melton. The meeting was called to order at 2:07 p.m.

Minutes of December 5 Regular Meeting and Reconvened Meeting of December 10, 2012

Bette Sprecher made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 5th Regular Meeting and December 10th Reconvened Meeting. Sandra Owen mentioned clarification was needed for the project deadline dates: reference to the project dates in the minutes was removed, leaving *Attachment E, Time-Product-Payment Schedule* as the correct reference for due dates. Shawn Leatherwood seconded the motion to approve the corrected minutes and all were in favor.

Consultant for Design Guidelines—Philip Thomason of Thomason & Associates

Chairman Owens welcomed Philip Thomason of Thomason & Associates, who is responsible for creating a set of design guidelines for Waynesville. The same power point presentation used at the Historic Preservation Commission meeting may be requested of Mr. Thomason through the Thomason & Associates website at www.thomasonandassociates.com.

Mr. Thomason reported that Waynesville is one of over two thousand communities that has created a Historic Preservation ordinance and is creating, voluntarily, a set of design guidelines for the community. Mr. Thomason explained that design guidelines provide a reference tool, information and education for rehabilitation techniques, and offer best practices for new construction, but voluntary guidelines only go so far.

Typically communities work with citizens, neighborhood and the downtown area to get consensus about having the design guidelines approved in a way that applications must be made to the Historic Preservation Commission called Certificates of Appropriateness. These certificates must be obtained before a building permit is issued. That way, rehabilitation in Waynesville will: be in keeping with the character of the district; reinforce property values; and reinforce the marketing of your community.

The purpose of project is to:

- create a user-friendly manual for use by the Historic Preservation Commission and people undertaking rehabilitation
- provide information on rehabilitation tax credits for Main Street , Frog Level and Spread Out Districts (these are districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and

there are significant tax credits available for undertaking rehabilitation of a historic building).

- provide a reference guide for additional sources of assistance.

The over-2000 communities have design guidelines created because design review:

- protects owner investment
- reinforces historical architecture and character of an area
- guides appropriate rehabilitation
- and encourages investment and economic development

Why are communities taking these steps for creating historic preservation commissions and undergoing design review?

Studies show that there are numerous benefits of historic preservation:

Economic

- creates jobs and new construction (more money stays in the community)
- promotes downtown revitalization
- increases property values
- is “smart growth” and “green” (“the greenest building is the one already built”)
- encourages heritage tourism
- reduces landfill costs
- rehabilitation of a building in a national historic district may entitle you to a 20% federal income tax credit (must comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s standards)

Quality of life benefits

- historic buildings give communities a unique identity and character
- many quality of life activities (museums, theaters, and libraries) are located in historic buildings
- baby boomers and generation Y are seeking dwellings in downtown areas near transportation

Design guideline fundamentals include:

- preserve original historic fabric
- reuse and recycle existing materials
- repair in kind with like materials, or if necessitated,
- replace in kind with like materials
- encourage minimal impact with rehabilitations and any additions

For commercial buildings, design guidelines encourage:

- preserving/maintaining any original elements of the storefront
- preserving/maintaining any original elements of the upper façade
- using universal design principals to make access easier
- building additions to the back or rooftop that are unobtrusive

For commercial buildings design guidelines will address and make recommendations for:

- lighting
- signage
- unobtrusive placement of heating/cooling systems
- parking considerations
- landscaping
- attractive rear access
- addition of appropriate roofline solar panels
- reflective roof materials for energy efficiency
- ADA compliance
- Infill compatibility/construction befitting downtown character
- Permeable paving

For residential buildings, design guidelines encourage:

- Preserving/maintaining architectural elements and details
- Preserving and maintaining original **siding** with specific studies regarding positives and negatives of vinyl alternative breathable, “green” siding materials
- Preserving/maintaining original **roof** materials
- Preserving/maintaining original **porches** and porch features
- Preserving/maintaining original old growth windows with specific studies regarding energy loss with replacement windows versus old growth windows

For residential buildings, design guidelines will address and make recommendations for:

- Signage
- Fencing
- Handicap ramps/wheelchair lifts that do not compromise historic appearance
- Additions—size and scale considerations while maintaining historic appearance
- New construction compatibility issues
- Energy efficiency issues—solar panels/shingles, retrofitting issues, minimal impact geothermal units
- Permeable paving

Mr. Thomason explained the final product being created for Waynesville is:

- an illustrated manual with photographs of the community, and details within the community;
- narrative about why we recommend a particular approach or design guideline element;
- what the Historic Preservation Commission would typically request (if there will be mandatory review) or what the Historic Preservation Commission would recommend (if there will be voluntary review);
- why these recommendations are being made;
- and how the recommendations benefit you as owner in regard to design and economics.

In summary, the design guidelines project will:

- reinforce your community's architectural and historical character
- stabilize or increase property in resale values in both commercial and residential historic districts
- provide a user-friendly, illustrated manual for use by property owners and the Historic Preservation Commission

Mr. Thomason hopes to have the design guidelines for Waynesville complete by May, 2013. The guidelines will need to be approved by Waynesville's Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office. Mr. Thomason welcomes any questions by email at thomason@bellsouth.net. His web address is www.thomasonandassociates.com.

Commission member Peter Sterling asked since after fifty years of learning how to make downtown's urban environment better and having learned a lot of lessons, can we simply apply the best practices to Waynesville?

Mr. Thomason answered that those in preservation are remaining consistent in applying the best practices we have learned, and the guidelines are written to make sure they are clear, but it is necessary to address new products and new advances in technology. It is also necessary to remember that a frustration remains in the preservation community: a lot of times best practices do not happen due to economic reasons or lack of knowledge, no matter how much those in the preservation community have tried to educate.

Mr. Sterling asked what can be done to short-circuit the obstruction of the process, what roadblocks are there in the way of making best practices possible. Mr. Thomason said those in the preservation community run into problems when opposition arises from lack of communication. Public meetings, going door-to-door, and petitions in support of historic overlay are good ways to let those in the community feel they have received significant notification of plans being made and what the final result will be. It is important to have the support of those in the community; the elected officials are looking for the support of a clear majority and will see the wisdom in doing this.

Mr. Thomason encourages the use of placards affixed to the face of historic buildings indicating the age of historic structures, as it is a part of marketing Waynesville's downtown as a tourist destination. This will be addressed in the design guidelines. Also, commercial and residential properties will be addressed as two distinctive sections in the design guidelines manual.

Mr. John Keith commended the Mayor and Historic Preservation Commission for pursuing the design guidelines project. As a downtown property owner, tax payer and real estate agent, Mr. Keith sees the value of the project and said the process illustrates progressive thinking. He encourages the Commission to push forward and present this to the Mayor and Aldermen.

Chairman Owens then recognized and thanked Town Planner Paul Benson for his efforts. Mr. Benson said the effort began before he was employed with the Town, but was not met with success. Mr. Benson likes the idea of getting a set of guidelines in place to govern the area when and if discussion begins about local historic districts.

Mr. Thomason will continue to work with Mr. Benson, scheduling informal community meetings and discussing what guidelines will be best for this community. A draft will be created based on best practices with specific illustrations taken from the community and should be ready for review this spring.

Former Mayor Henry Foy added this is the best thing we are going to be able to do for Waynesville in our lifetime.

Peter Sterling believes Waynesville's Historic Preservation Commission would be well served by taking the years of experience of Thomason & Associates as guidance in this process.

Adjournment

With no further business, Shawn Leatherwood made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Bette Sprecher. The meeting adjourned at 3:27.

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Nikki Owens, Chairman