

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
TOWN HALL
JULY 3, 2013
WEDNESDAY 2 PM



Those present:

Chairman Henry Foy
Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher
Nikki Owens
Ann Melton
Sandra Owen

Also present:

Town Planner Paul Benson
Secretary Ginny Boyer
Philip Thomason of Thomason & Associates
Jennifer Cathey, Restoration Specialist from the State Historic Preservation Office

Absent:

Shawn Leatherwood
Peter Sterling

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes, June 5, 2013

Approval of the June 5 minutes was deferred until the August 7, 2013 meeting. Nikki Owens said she will not be in attendance at the August meeting but approves the minutes as presented.

Draft Design Guidelines—Presentation by Mr. Philip Thomason

Mr. Thomason reported he has made the revisions as requested by both the Waynesville Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office. He is continuing to revise the draft document after having received some additional information from Town Planner Paul Benson (maps and a flow chart on COA process). Photographs will also be updated as he collects them on his visit this afternoon and tomorrow.

Bette Sprecher recommended using a wider selection of photographs from the Town and less of those from Boundary Street.

Mr. Thomason asked commission members if they can suggest good examples of outbuildings for photographs as these are always challenging. If he had particular addresses and permission to

visit private property, he would have the capability of capturing best practices for outbuildings within the town.

Mr. Thomason announced the public meeting scheduled for 5 pm in Town Hall where he will answer any questions about the guidelines, offer representative pages as handouts, deliver a power-point presentation and see what comments the public may offer after which time he will return for review in a week or two.

Mr. Thomason mentioned Jennifer Cathey's review of the design guidelines was "very thorough" and he has "tweaked and massaged" the verbage to be more in line with what the State wants to see.

Chairman Henry Foy asked if signs should be under awnings. Walking down Main Street, it is difficult to see them. Town Planner Paul Benson mentioned the recent presentation by Roger Brooks International in which blade signs that project out from buildings were discussed. Mr. Benson felt that blade signs would not be compatible with awnings. Mr. Benson went on to say the big issue here is a lot of the signs Waynesville has aren't ADA compliant and need to be raised. He also said he felt business owners think signage is more important than it really is although he understands signs are important and need to be provided. The town's sign ordinance is currently being looked at so that it will be able to offer appropriate choices.

Nikki Owens called the design guidelines "beautiful" and "very helpful".

Sandra Owen mentioned to Mr. Thomason that as recorded in the previous meeting's minutes, commissioners had "really positive things to say" about the guidelines. Ms. Owen is impressed with the guidelines expressing not only what should be done but how to do it—a practical guide.

Chairman Foy said there is "certainly nothing controversial" in the guidelines at which point Town Planner Paul Benson said Richard Miller has concerns the guidelines are making things more expensive; that will need to be addressed. As things stand, the design guidelines do not apply to downtown. It will take another process for the guidelines to apply to downtown because currently downtown is not a local historic district but a national historic district--on the national register. Any owner that would go forward with rehabilitation would abide by the guidelines on a voluntary, not mandatory basis. Property owners would have to take another step, becoming a local historic district (and that after significant discussion), before the guidelines would become mandatory, not voluntary.

Nikki Owens reiterated that now we only have local historic landmarks, no local historic districts. Ann Melton said no one is going to work toward becoming a local district. Mr. Benson disagreed, saying "sometimes neighborhoods rally".

Sandra Owen said the Historic Preservation Commission itself was born shortly after the demolition two town buildings (more information to be supplied in the August minutes).

Rock Walls

Town Planner Paul Benson reported he has the rock wall files from when commissioners (of the 2006 commission) divided Waynesville into districts with each commissioner volunteering to take pictures of the walls in their assigned district. Mr. Benson said Peter Sterling did the best job, with a comprehensive list of labeled pictures and a narrative index which relates to the photographs. Mr. Benson said “I think we have the whole town covered” although the rest is a “varying amount of product”.

Mr. Benson reported on the South Main Street wall that is in disrepair. After contacting Jonathan Woodard, District Engineer with NC DOT, Mr. Benson called the wall a “hot potato” with neither Town nor State wanting responsibility for its repair.

As for the age of the South Main Street wall, Mr. Benson said experts can date that. Chairman Foy said Green Hill Cemetery was established in 1876 and he believes improvements to the road, and quite possibly the building of the wall occurred well after that. Nikki Owens mentioned the grapevine joint (on portions of the wall that have not been repaired) being much like the ones in Woolsey Heights’ stonework and feels they were crafted around the same time.

Nikki Owens asked Jennifer Cathey if the Town’s walls could be designated as landmarks. Jennifer Cathey said it is possible to list stone walls under national register. Brevard College has a national register--listed stone wall on its campus that is “very imposing” with an “obviously public feel”. Nikki Owens mentioned Okracoke’s many cisterns being designated as local landmarks. While Ms. Cathey doubts utilitarian walls could be individually listed, she said to have the walls designated as local landmarks would set a good precedent. Ms. Owens said of the rock walls: “as a whole they define our town”. Ms. Cathey said “I absolutely agree” and suggested continuing with the inventory of the walls including: descriptions on where they are located, mapping them and including ownership information, after which time education and outreach would be the next step so the public knows they are significant. Nikki Owens suggested choosing a wall in need of repair, finding a mason, and publicizing for a repair/public workshop of the wall.

Ann Melton mentioned the idea of a walking tour book specifically for rock walls. She would want to include maps taken from aerial surveys (supplied by the Planning Department) to include in the book and serve as locators for the rock walls.

Other Business—Love Lane

Ann Melton asked for the Commission’s next project to be Love Lane’s designation as national historic district due to Love Lane being the oldest historic district in Waynesville. Mr. Benson said as a spokesman for the Town, he is waiting for the neighborhood to do a report.

It was then discussed how a resolution could be drawn up from the Historic Preservation Commission for the purpose of recognizing Love Lane as the oldest residential street in Waynesville and a place of historic significance. The resolution could then be passed on to the Board of Aldermen for endorsement. Mr. Benson said once a resolution comes before the Board

of Aldermen, every property owner from Love Lane should come to the Board of Aldermen meeting. Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher hoped to see a draft resolution on Love Lane by the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting. Ann Melton agreed to work on the draft resolution and looks forward to “Love Lane Day”.

Other Business—Greenhill Cemetery as national register/local landmark

Commission members discussed the possibility of Greenhill Cemetery being nominated for both national register and local landmark. Town Planner Benson said the town could get a consultant to give estimates on a report (which would be used for both listings) with the project possibly being funded by a future CLG grant. Jennifer Cathey said Annie McDonald, SHPO’s Preservation Specialist, will look at it.

Ann Melton asked what the commission needs to do to get started on the cemetery’s designation. Chairman Foy and Town Planner Paul Benson agreed it is important to compile and record the cemetery’s history. Mapping of the cemetery and inquiring about grant opportunities would also be important steps.

Other Business—Selling *Historic Waynesville, a self-guided tour* at upcoming festivals

Paul Benson encouraged members to sell books at upcoming festivals if that is what they want to do. The books are kept in the vault at the Municipal Building.

Adjourn

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

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Henry Foy, Chairman