

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
TOWN HALL
DECEMBER 4, 2013



Those present:
Chairman Henry Foy
Shawn Leatherwood
Peter Sterling
Sandra Owen
Ann Melton

Also present:
Town Planner Paul Benson
Secretary Ginny Boyer
Lorraine Conard, Strand Theater

Absent:
Nikki Owens
Bette Sprecher

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2013

Ann Melton made a motion to approve the November 6th, 2013 minutes as presented; this was seconded by Shawn Leatherwood. All were in favor.

2. Follow-up to SHPO's Annie McDonald's presentation, specifically re: Greenhill Cemetery

Chairman Foy said Greenhill Cemetery is an historic site in Waynesville and should be showcased as a walking tour. Information needs to be attained from the Methodist church, which apparently built a church on the property then later moved it (currently Mt. Zion Methodist church, the oldest building in Waynesville). Sandra Owen agreed to talk to the Methodist Church on the building's history. A map of the property is also needed. Town Planner Paul Benson plans to check with the Public Works Department for a reduced map of both the old and new areas. Melinda Messer was mentioned as having done a series of books and specifically an article on the origins of Greenhill Cemetery. It was mentioned there may be something in the Haywood County minutes regarding Greenhill Cemetery.

Town Planner Paul Benson mentioned the Academy, chartered in 1811 as being the first post-secondary education building in Waynesville which fell apart on this site. The Loves acquired the property very early on, soon after it was taken from the Cherokee. Everything in Waynesville was Love property as a gift from Revolutionary War efforts. The earliest burial in the cemetery is 1819, a Love, but the cemetery was probably started before that.

Chairman Foy's grandfather who died in 1876 is buried there as well as his grandmother who died in 1866. Chairman Foy said it used to be the cemetery with the First Baptist Church which presumably moved to the location (*clarification please-GB*).

Ann Melton said every sentence should be collected pertaining to the cemetery and every person associated with it written down. The list of Haywood County cemeteries at the Municipal Building should be utilized as a source. One of Carolyn Miller's sons (*Carolyn Miller, Pulitzer Prize winning author of Lamb in His Bosom*) is buried in the cemetery and was the stepson of Clyde Ray.

3. Preservation Plan

Town Planner Paul Benson distributed his "epistle on preservation planning" in which he tried to summarize what we've been doing and the current concerns of the commission. He mentioned a professional could be hired to do a preservation plan. Chairman Foy would like the Commission to study Mr. Benson's document and comment at the next meeting.

4. Retreat

Peter Sterling feels the commission needs a half-day retreat to deal with issues, approve a preservation plan and move forward with strategic planning. Chairman Foy agreed and mentioned needing the history of the old Sulphur Springs hotel which could be an addition to future revisions of the walking tour brochure.

Members agreed on a January 22nd special meeting in lieu of a regular meeting (which falls on January 1st). Shawn Leatherwood asked that each member look at Mr. Sterling's and Mr. Benson's reports for discussion at the retreat and so that members can rank what is most important and realistically decide what the commission can tackle.

5. Lake Junaluska Survey

Town Planner Paul Benson sent the idea of a Lake Junaluska survey to Annie McDonald with the State Historic Preservation Office who thinks it is a strong idea for funding. Mr. Benson feels the people living at Lake Junaluska will welcome the Historic Preservation Commission's services and potentially provide members.

Shawn Leatherwood asked what the status is on the Lake Junaluska merger. Mr. Benson answered there is a renewed push for annexation. By April, 2014 it may be presented in short session of the General Assembly and could take place July 1, 2014.

6. Application—Strand Theater Sign

At the last board of Aldermen meeting, the board adopted a revision to the sign ordinance with the amendment permitting marquee signs in national historic districts but any alterations to the existing sign must be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. Lorraine Conard approached the commission with changes to the current sign of Strand Theater in mind. Sandra Owen expressed she did not want to see anything bigger than what was there originally.

Ms. Conard said there may be a two-phase approach to the sign, with the first being the lower, horizontal, more functional piece then the second more decorative, historical piece later (but not necessarily being "twenty feet in the air"). A design for the top portion has not been decided upon but Ms. Conard stressed the importance of completing the lower signage so that information about the Strand's events and showtimes can be displayed.

Ms. Melton asked about the possibility of restoring the sign back to the original design and asked if the original upper sign is still in the theater's possession. Ms. Conard answered the upper sign came down for repair and is "mind-blowingly expensive to repair".

Shawn Leatherwood is delighted the building is active again and would like to move forward with phase one and but more detailed drawings are needed, at least common architectural drawings of what the sign will look like including: specific materials used, dimensions, how it is trimmed, how many rows of letters, specification of electrical components, etc. Commissioners need to understand if the materials will fit in with the design guidelines. Once the drawings are hand, the commission would then call a meeting and make an informed decision.

Chairman Foy likes the idea of keeping the informative marquee sign, is delighted with what Ms. Conard is trying to do and does not want to be a hindrance or to make things complicated. He said, once complete the sign will be the most prominent thing on Main Street. Mr. Foy asked if there are historic plans of the marquee. Sandra Owen said that Joey Massie bought it and had original pencil drawings and that Dr. Owen built it (*clarification please—GB*). Ms. Owen added this is the first signage the commission will have been responsible for.

Mr. Benson said he did not see anything wrong with a temporary banner on the lower sign until something more permanent is in place. The biggest issue, he said, is "off premise advertising with a real estate company. You cannot advertise a business that is not located in that building. That is a violation of the sign ordinance and not permitted". If a movie or show has a sponsor that is ok but the sign can't have a sponsor. For example "Nutcracker presented by the Architectural Studio" would be allowed under the special events provision.

Ms. Conard agreed to forward via email a description of detailed plans to Mr. Benson for the commission's review, thanked the commission for its time and left the meeting.

Mr. Leatherwood expressed concerns with Ms. Conard's project saying that the building codes are getting so complex and are in place to protect people's life, safety and welfare. The sign could fall and kill an innocent person. A licensed architect is needed for a project like this. Mr. Leatherwood went on to say "almost everyone needs required drawings" and Jason Rogers in the Building Inspections Department is the one to tell Ms. Conard if she needs a licensed architect or not.

Peter Sterling said that the commission must set a precedent and needs "standards from the get-go". Mr. Benson said a formal application could be prepared with Mr. Leatherwood's help and be presented to Ms. Conard. The current ordinance gives the Historic Preservation Commission complete authority for the type of sign that will be allowed.

Mr. Sterling added that Ms. Conard is interested in "providing a good experience for the community" and her "heart's in the right place".

Mr. Benson reiterated to members that the entire façade of The Strand is circa 2013. There is "no historic fabric". Shawn Leatherwood agreed and said the commission is "just looking at a marquee sign in national register district downtown".

7. Other Business

Mr. Benson mentioned the Town has always annually had a Christmas dinner for employees, retirees and boards & commissions but a luncheon and training session for various boards & commissions, separate from the Christmas dinner, is what is planned for spring, 2014.

Mr. Benson expressed the commission's interest in meeting at the Municipal Building rather than the new board room to Town Manager Marcy Onieal who approved the meeting place change. From now on, meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission will take place in the more informal setting of the Municipal Building.

Chairman Foy expressed that it is "getting increasingly difficult" for him to chair the commission's meetings and he would like for someone to step in his place. Mr. Benson mentioned the idea of adding members in more of a workshop format, up to nine or even fifteen members.

8. Adjourn

After no further business, Shawn Leatherwood moved to adjourn; Ann Melton seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Henry Foy, Chairman