

SPECIAL MEETING/RETREAT MINUTES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM
16 SOUTH MAIN STREET
FEBRUARY 25, 2014



Those present:

Chairman Henry Foy
Peter Sterling
Sandra Owen
Ann Melton
Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher

Also present:

Town Planner Paul Benson
Secretary Ginny Boyer

Absent:

Nikki Owens
Shawn Leatherwood

Mr. Peter Sterling began the retreat by saying he is pleased the commission has decided to increase the commission's membership thereby building the strength of the commission beyond its present capacity. He hopes the Board of Aldermen will agree with the commission's stance on identifying members who have skills in preservation planning and a positive attitude.

Out of the retreat, Mr. Sterling would like to see the commission identify projects worthy of the commission's involvement-- ones that make sense and ones the commission has the resources to fulfill.

He mentioned his piece "Preservation Sensitive and Preservation Savvy" in which he explains the need to be savvy about Waynesville's future while being sensitive to the needs of people who live and work here in hopes the commission can contribute to Waynesville's future success.

Ann Melton said there are six projects on the agenda and each person should take responsibility for making them happen.

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2014

Ann Melton made a motion to approve the February 5, 2014 minutes as presented; this was seconded by Bette Sprecher. All were in favor.

2. Increasing the Historic Preservation Commission from seven to nine members.

Town Planner Paul Benson said if the commission agrees to increasing membership from seven to nine, names need to be submitted and he will start looking into if they are qualified for the position.

Peter Sterling submitted: Stan Smith, Lee Starnes and Ron Sullivan.

Bette Sprecher submitted: Ron Huelster

Ann Melton submitted: Cecelia Ruth Marcus

Chairman Foy submitted: Warren Gresham

Mr. Benson recommended having someone from the downtown district, a sympathetic owner. For the ordinance to be amended, public notices must be sent and public hearings held for both the Planning Board and Board of Aldermen meetings. The wheels may turn slowly because of the process involved, but he doesn't see any reason why the commission can't get the word out now and have those named attend meetings on an informal basis.

3. Mr. Benson on his *Past Actions and Future Goals* Report.

a. Local Historic District Designation

Mr. Benson reported if Main Street National Historic District became a local district, the designation would cover the entire district and give the Historic Preservation control over both old and new buildings. Any demolitions could be delayed up to a year, and any changes to the exterior of buildings would have to come before the HPC for approval under the Town's new design guidelines. The project has already been done to place Main Street Historic District on the National Register so the research is complete. Although the State does not fund local historic designation projects, the Historic Preservation Commission may want to approach the Board of Aldermen for funding. There is \$4,000 from Historic Waynesville brochure sales that could partially fund the project.

Commissioners decided to use the following strategies in pursuit of local district designation:

- Ongoing education and "sales" programs including seminars, meet & greets, personal lobbying and articles in newspapers—entire commission involvement
- Have Mr. Philip Thomason of Thomason and Associates, the developer of Waynesville's Design Guidelines, to meet with owners in the Downtown National Historic District—entire commission involvement
- Invite staff from Asheville (Stacey Murton) and Hendersonville, those who deal with local districts, to address the commission on the sequence of events that led to local historic designation and how to be more preservation sensitive—Paul Benson

- Get a list of owners in the Main Street National Register district, divide the list and have commissioners speak personally to each one—entire commission involvement
- Be a presence at a Downtown Waynesville Association board meeting, be included as an agenda item—entire commission involvement
- Speak personally to Director Buffy Phillips about the positive aspects of local designation—Henry Foy

Mr. Benson asked commissioners to be prepared for a long process. Property owners in local historic districts in Asheville wanted designation. For example, Asheville’s Montford was a once grand neighborhood with large houses that were unaffordable for single families to maintain. The houses were then divided into rental units and subsequently fell into disrepair. Once new owners began purchasing the homes and restoring them, they wanted protection for their investment. In this case the people wanted the designation. Government works only when people lead it.

b. Landmark Designations

Vice-Chairman Bette Sprecher wanted to discuss the issue of vinyl siding as it applies to local landmark designation. Her concern is that there are several homes she feels are local landmark eligible but because of their existing vinyl siding and the owners’ unwillingness to remove it, are ineligible for local landmark designation. She said many of the bigger homes are very costly to keep painted. The possibility of “grandfathering in” properties that have vinyl siding but are otherwise suitable for local landmark designation was mentioned.

Ann Melton mentioned the vinyl siding issue as being the only thing standing in the way of Love Lane being a National Register Historic District, but that if the Town of Waynesville could relax its stance on existing siding, there is a chance Love Lane could become a local historic district.

Members agreed to look at the list of properties the commission has in hand (Mr. Benson provided the list for viewing), those that may be suitable for local landmark designation but are not yet listed as such, and visit some of these properties.

Bette Sprecher made a motion to visit the houses of Love Lane specifically for the next regularly scheduled meeting in March. Ann Melton seconded and all were in favor.

c. Inventory Update

Town Planner Paul Benson mentioned when Lake Junaluska is annexed, it will be a very high priority to have properties inventoried. The Town may be eligible for a grant for inventory purposes after the annexation. The Town’s existing inventory could use updating as our current inventory is outdated, updating inventory stimulates public involvement and helps identify

properties with local landmark and national register potential. Members agreed they would like to see a comprehensive inventory (Town of Waynesville, Lake Junaluska) after the annexation.

d. Stone Walls

Waynesville was divided into districts and commissioners took inventory of the stone walls, with Peter Sterling's being the most comprehensive. Members discussed doing the following with stone walls inventory:

- Showing the stone wall inventory to the Board of Aldermen to show them what the Historic Preservation Commission is capable of doing
- Create a brochure of stone wall inventory including best examples, maps and handicapped accessible facilities in town to be included with the current Historic Waynesville, a self-guided tour booklet
- Create a book specifically for stone walls divided into sections representing each "district" (not a brochure attached to the walking tour booklet) complete with photographs of best examples, available history, a blurb of each example of masonry, a map including handicapped accessible facilities

e. Town-County Preservation Commission

Any interest among commissioners to merge commissions into a town-county preservation commission was briefly discussed. No action was taken.

4. Historic Walking Tour Brochure

Members discussed ways in which the walking tour would be distributed, sold and improved upon:

- Ann Melton and Sandra Owen agreed to, once a month, distribute the brochure to restaurants and shops, the chamber of commerce, etc.
- Payment will be in advance and everyone will pay three dollars each for up to fifty copies
- Ginny Boyer will make placards stating "this brochure may be purchased for three dollars"
- Bette Sprecher will ask Michael Beadle about his agreement with Bogart's restaurant to have a copy of his Haywood history book on every table.
- Mr. Benson will supply the commission with a GIS map in hopes that Chris Sylvester can do a stylized map as an insert to the brochure, complete with a lot of color coding for bathroom facilities, parking lots and visitor information.
- For the next edition, the Sulphur Springs Hotel needs to be included

- Peter Sterling would like to see the last (blank) page of the walking tour brochure utilized in a creative way

5. Cemetery Brochure

Sandra Owen and Ann Melton approached the First United Methodist Church in hopes of finding information on Greenhill Cemetery and the history was discussed among members:

- The first record of the church owning the property is a deed in 1855.
- After acquisition, a small frame building (the Academy) was built on the property which was later moved in 1883, becoming the Zion church.
- The area was called Green Hill before it became a cemetery and began as a family cemetery.
- The town either purchased the cemetery or was given the land by the Loves. A copy of the deed needs to be acquired through the courthouse.
- 1819 is the oldest legible tombstone
- The land may not have been acquired at one time. In 1811 Paul Thomas Love conveyed eight acres to Greenhill Academy when the graveyard was already established. (Thomas Love was Robert Love's older brother).
- Angel statues in the cemetery were carved by Thomas Wolfe's father.
- It is believed that Prospect Hill and Green Hill are the highest elevations in Waynesville.
- John C. Smathers is buried there with his whole family.
- Once all of the history is compiled, it needs to be brought back to the commission so that a brochure may be created and it be marketed successfully.

6. Other business

- Paul Benson spoke with Nikki Owens and she plans to continue service to the commission.
- There has been no update on The Strand Theater's signage.
- On March 9th at 5:00 pm The Strand Theater will show a film history of Cataloochee.
- Chairman Foy asked the commission to be ready to elect a new Chairman at the next meeting.
- Elections for officers will be in April.

7. Adjourn

With no further business, the retreat adjourned.

Ginny Boyer, Secretary

Henry Foy, Chairman

