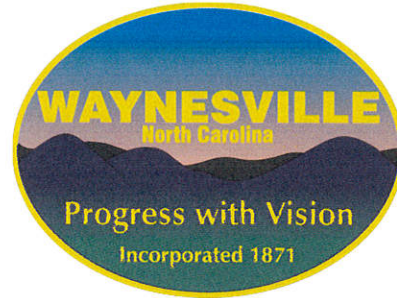


AGENDA
SPECIAL MEETING
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 16 SOUTH MAIN STREET
JANUARY 22, 2014
WEDNESDAY 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2013
2. Strategic Planning---Peter Sterling
3. Past Actions and Future Goals—Paul Benson
 - Local Historic District Designation
 - Landmark Designations
 - Inventory Update
 - Stone Walls & Cemetery Brochure
 - Town-County Preservation Commission
4. Historic Waynesville Walking Tour Brochure
 - Complimentary copies or donations requested?
 - Who will oversee distribution, collection of monies, revisions/additions?
5. The Strand Theater update

The next regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be February 5, 2014.

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

STRATEGIC PLANNING

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Commission has the opportunity to facilitate a broader understanding and commitment to the values of being “preservation savvy” as well as being “preservation sensitive”. To be more savvy about preservation the public needs to know how the community benefits from standards that elevate the historic character of Waynesville. This sensitivity forms the foundation for historic preservation because when citizens become advocates themselves for preservation, then progress can be made.

One of the key elements to successful preservation is the vitality of the Commission. Commissions that do not actively advocate for programs and projects that improve the chances for sustained efforts for historic preservation contribute to the inertia that hampers progress. Presently, there are seven members of the Historic Preservation Commission. We have learned that the Commission is most effective when it identifies issues that have the greatest impact on the community and on the Commission itself.

The Retreat in January is an ideal occasion for the Commissioners to reach consensus on what important steps could/should be taken now to magnify the effectiveness of the Historic Preservation Commission. A report on the work of the Commission will be provided to the Aldermen and the media. Periodic reviews of the work of the Commission will be planned.

Town of Waynesville Historic Preservation Commission – Past Actions and Future Goals

Since inception in January of 1995 the Waynesville Historic Preservation Commission has a strong record of preservation efforts. Beginning with a comprehensive survey of historic resources in 1996 which generated much of the essential information for the publication of “Mountain Gables, A History of Haywood County Architecture” in 2001, and for the identification of historic resources eligible for National Register and Local Landmark designation. The Commission has used its most powerful tool in the designation of 14 Landmarks which now have the highest level of regulatory protection available under North Carolina law. More honorary, but also a powerful tool for preservation through the potential for income tax credit, is listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission has overseen projects leading to listing of the town’s three most intact historic districts: Main Street, Frog Level and Spread Out. Finally, the survey and the subsequent National Register and Local Landmark research reports provided the information used to produce a “self-guided tour” of the town’s historic resources – a popular publication that has no doubt introduced many visitors and citizens to these resources.

An on-going responsibility of the Commission will be stewardship of the designated resources. Exterior alterations to Local Landmarks require Commission review and approval in the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness. An important tool just developed and published for this responsibility is the Design Review Guidelines. Because of this document the Commission is now better able to review and advise property owners as to appropriate maintenance and alteration of historic structures.

This sequence of activities is typical and the reason that the NC Department of Archives and History stresses the importance of an academic inventory of the community’s resources. That information provides the basis for subsequent historic designations, and it is these designations that provide both the regulatory requirements and tax credit incentives for historic preservation.

Where to go from here?

Arguably the town’s best preserved historic districts have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (perhaps all that currently qualify), most and almost certainly the best structures have been individually listed on the National Register (again, perhaps all that would qualify) and if not all that would qualify perhaps all the structures owned by willing owners have been designated as Local Landmarks. Now what?

Some ideas:

1. Local Historic District Designation: The ground work has been laid for the potential designation of Main Street, Frog Level and Spread Out. National Register nomination reports provide much of the information required for local district designation reports. Well developed Design Guidelines are now in place. However, this is a level of regulation that has not been requested by property owners and has been met with concern and resistance. Unfortunately, the time is probably not right for moving forward with local historic district designation and it may take the demolition of a key building to generate the awareness that this level of protection would be desirable.

2. Landmark Designations: Appeals in the form of direct mailings, workshops or perhaps more importantly personal contact to the owners of potential Landmark properties. This was last done a few years ago, but no new applications resulted. The cost of the report, the permanence of the design restrictions and the presence of non-historic siding have been issues cited in situations where property owners have declined or been advised not to go forward with Landmark designation. The Commission may wish to reconsider its position on the presence of non-historic siding as a disqualifying feature of an otherwise worthy structure.

3. Inventory Update: Now that the Architectural Inventory is almost 20 years old it would be good to consider a project to update the inventory. With the passing of time new resources would now qualify for historic designation and with the planned annexation of the Lake Junaluska it would be important to include that area as there are undoubtedly historic resources present and an interest in historic preservation in that community.

4. Stone Walls: This has been an on-going area of concern for the Commission. While we have discovered that there is nothing the Commission may do in the way of regulatory protection, the Commission may wish to consider using its "bully pulpit" (and brochure sale proceeds) to raise awareness and provide for future preservation. The wall along South Main Street in the vicinity of Green Hill Cemetery lends particular character to the community and might be a good focal point. Research has shown that the wall is something of a "hot potato" with neither the Town government nor the NC Department of Transportation wanting to claim responsibility for the wall's maintenance. In fact, both organizations have undertaken repair activities in the past that have not been entirely appropriate in preserving the historic character of the wall. The Commission could undertake to obtain a commitment from the Town of Waynesville to maintain the wall in its historic state.

5. Town-County Preservation Commission: This has long been recognized as a need in Haywood County. The county has no formal preservation program and needs a Commission to be eligible for grant funding of essential preservation steps, as have been undertaken by Waynesville. Individual members could use contacts through the Preservation and Genealogical Society and the Bethel Rural Community Organization (and perhaps others) to work toward this goal. A combined municipal-county Commission operates in other counties and may be a good idea for Haywood County.

Finally, preservation is doing. While it is easy to say things such as "someone ought to do this or that" each member of the Commission should take personal responsibility for preservation. If you own a historic house that needs a coat of paint – paint it. If you know someone with a property that might qualify for designation, buy them lunch and sell them on it. Get to know members of the Board of Aldermen and the County Commissioners and be ready to give them a call in support of a preservation activity. If you know someone with money to invest encourage them to buy and restore a historic property. Instead of holding a workshop with a dry preservation speaker with slides from Asheville or Boston or wherever – be a personal ambassador for preservation! To be successful the effort must come from influential, well-connected individuals in the community!

