



Meeting Minutes
Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission
7pm – County Commission Room, Charles Town Library
Charles Town, WV
September 18, 2017

Members Present: Martin Burke (Chair), Curt Mason, Sara Lambert, Leigh Koonce
Guests: James Tolbert, Linda Ballard, Gloria Lindsey, Brenda McCray, Mr. and Mrs. Gary Tucker, John Demer, Lauren Kelly, Peter Onoszko

M. Burke called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. He apologized for moving meeting from the normally scheduled date, but since the commission was voting on specific items, they needed to give the public adequate notice.

Public Comment: Linda Downing Ballard, accompanied by Gloria Lindsey and Brenda McCray, spoke. This is a follow-up from an August 15 letter to the County Commission to request that the Confederate bronze plaque at entrance of the courthouse be removed presently, and without fanfare. She noted that there is no memorial to the thousands of men, women, and children enslaved in Jefferson County. There was a County Commission meeting on the 8th and a unanimous decision to leave the plaque in place. At the CC meeting, there was a 2nd motion to create a citizen committee to group the plaques together and to consider a plaque for Union soldiers and for the enslaved. Onoszko agreed to serve as liaison between the county commission and the JCHLC.

Ballard added that the Confederate plaque is inappropriate, does not tell true story of Civil War, and diminishes the purpose of why the country went to war. She said the 2nd motion was offered as an appeasement, and there is no appeasement for slavery. She added that it is shameful that debate is necessary in 2017, and that she doesn't want visitors to the county or her grandchildren going to vote to have to pass the plaque. She hopes for the JCHLC's support to remove the plaque.

Onoszko said that Ballard had asked for guidance for the memorial, and he advised her to go to the JCHLC. He said it was important to note that people were sold on the courthouse steps (not inside the courthouse) and that it seemed appropriate to have a memorial to those people at the courthouse.

Burke pointed out that the JCHLC's jurisdiction is the unincorporated areas of the county. The courthouse itself is in the Charles Town Historic District. The courthouse committee is reassembling to address the interests of all invested and jurisdictional parties, and will

eventually come together once the new judge is appointed, and they will make recommendations on matters pertaining to the Courthouse. Commissioner Leigh Koonce is on the committee. Burke's personal stance would be that all plaques be removed from the courthouse, as all applied signage detracts from the architecture of the Historic building. There were courthouse committee discussions regarding the landscaping during the front rehab of the Courthouse, and the JCHLC has previously advised that a minimalist approach is best. He would prefer nothing on the landscape nor the building. The JCHLC acts in an advisory role to the County Commission and can provide their opinion to the Commission about specific memorialization proposals.

Ballard said she didn't request for anything to be added but only wanted the plaque removed.

Burke suggested that it be the first thing the courthouse committee discusses.

Koonce said that reconstituting the courthouse committee was taking a lot of time and asked how this process would work for the JCHLC.

Burke said with the issue of the courthouse lawn, the JCHLC held public meetings, looked at several drawings, and the committee made a recommendation to the County Commission to remove vegetation that obscured building. This should be the same process.

Onoszko said when courthouse committee is reconstituted, the judge will have more to say about how the courthouse looks. The County Commission controls maintenance even though the building is in Charles Town. The county clerk will also have a lot of say. He was not certain about the County Commission's feelings about removing all plaques. It will be appropriate to talk about plaques in general and memorials in general when the courthouse committee reconvenes.

Koonce made a motion for the JCHLC to a hold public meeting on October 11, rather than wait for the reconvening of the courthouse committee, to have a public discussion of the Confederate plaque on the Courthouse with the end goal of the JCHLC making an official recommendation to County Commission, seconded by Lambert, and passed.

There was further discussion about the next steps and concern from Ballard about a public hearing creating another hostile situation. Onoszko offered to check if there is a statutory requirement for what the JCHLC does; if not, there is no need for a public hearing for the JCHLC to make a recommendation to the county commission. He also said there was research being done to find out who authorized the plaque in the first place since there is no mention of it in the County Commission minutes from 1986. If the County Commission never authorized its placement, he would recommend taking it down. Ballard asked if this research would be done by October 11, and Onoszko said it would and that there are Commission meetings on October 5th and 19th. Burke said the plan is to hold a JCHLC plaque discussion on October 11 until he hears otherwise from Onoszko.

Status of the Coyle Cemetery: The previous AmeriCorps member Rob Aitcheson submitted a grant to cut trees down at the site, and Shepherd student Brittany Williams completed some research on who was buried there. Gary Tucker said he's done some research as well and has been pulling weeds. There is currently no cemetery plot map. 9 individuals are confirmed to be buried there, with a total of 40 likely to be located there. Burke added that the JCHLC

received a grant this year to restack the stone wall. The cemetery is on county property and work is actively being overseen by our current AmeriCorps Member, Lauren Kelly.

Minutes for July meeting: Burke motioned to accept July meeting minutes, Koonce seconded, and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Koonce moved to approve, Burke seconded, and passed.
Burke reviewed the current bank account balance and noted we just received August hotel/motel funds.

WVDOH MOA Rt. 340 extension to VA line: Burke is working with WVDOH concerning construction on 340, which is to be 4-laned all the way to VA. He commented on mitigation strategies. The DOH has offered \$50,000 for National Register research for Wayside Farm, Olive Boy Farm, Byrdland, and the village of Rippon. The property most impacted is Wayside Farm. Burke suggested a public meeting about mitigation proposals.

Burke moved to accept MOA, Lambert seconded, and passed.

Comments on NR nomination – *Wild Goose*: John Demer said he is shepherding the nomination through the WVSHPO and will present it to a state committee on October 16 in Wheeling. He is confident it will be accepted, at which time it will then be released to Washington DC for review. Burke added that the owners want all 176 acres in the nomination.

Mason called for a vote to approve, Koonce seconded, and passed.

Peter Burr Farm Event application for 2018 - Craft Fair: This is for a May 5, 2018 event. Parks and Rec will be voting on the event on the 20th. There will be no alcohol. Burke said the event has outgrown the Bloomery Distillery and is looking for more space. A rep from Parks and Rec will be on-site during the event, and they are collecting a deposit and will be responsible for any repairs needed because of damage from the event. Koonce expressed concern about policing at the event and recommended a walk-thru with Parks and Rec before the event opens. JCHLC will be printing interpretive material (brochures) to have available during the event.

Burke motioned to approve, Lambert seconded, and passed.

WV GeoExplorer Project: Bill Theriault not present to comment.

Discussion - JCHLC going to six meetings a year: Onoszko said the planning commission has off-schedule meetings on stand-by.

Announcements and Reports:

- A. Status of Historic Preservation Zoning Ordinance: On Sept 12th, the planning commission met and discussed the proposed HL ordinance and made some significant changes. It will be taken up again for a vote at the October PC meeting. There have been revisions on wording.
- B. JC Courthouse Committee: Koonce has talked to the county clerk regarding handouts on the history of the Courthouse. He requests that the JCHLC consider producing

interpretive materials for the courthouse based Judge Sanders' current historical essay. This brochure could be made available at both the Courthouse and the County Visitors Center. Burke said he would add it to Kelly's to-do list.

- C. Status of NR nomination – *The Rocks*: Kelly said research was put on hold, as some deed information has been lost in a fire, and it would take a while to finish.
- D. Status of brochures and interpretative projects: Kelly said she would be finalizing the brochures with Eden Design that week and would then be sending them to the printer.
- E. Status of Old Standard Easement: Burke said it would be closing that week – 200 acres preserved in Harpers Ferry.
- F. Status of Eyler house deconstruction: Burke said we are recycling as much of it as possible, and that parts were being removed at other people's expense.
- G. Status of endowment fund raising: There is \$11,604 in the bank. Burke hopes to send out a mailing within a month to solicit donations. Endowment could be used to assist in repair of Category I and II County historic properties.
- H. Status of AmeriCorps program – Kelly has re-upped for one year and will complete her term by August 2018.
- I. Goodbye to Curt Mason! JCHLC recognized Curt for his years of dedicated service to the County and to historic preservation. We wish him well on his new pursuits!

Mason motioned to adjourn, seconded by Lambert, and passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm.