



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission**  
**7pm – County Commission Room, Charles Town Library**  
**Charles Town, WV**  
**February 14, 2018**



Members Present: Martin Burke (Chair), Sara Lambert, Leigh Koonce  
Guests: John Demer, Bill Theriault, Peter Onoszko, Bill Polk, David Tabb, Tim Johnson, Lauren Kelly

Burke called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

**I. Public Comments**

David Tabb lives in a c.1850 home in the county and feels that the tax assessor is not friendly to historic homes. Historic homes have issues with things like stairs and windows, and he is being assessed as though he owns a new home. The assessor measures size by exterior measurements - not interior - and uses realtor values that are based on square footage estimated from the outside. He asked for assistance to educate the assessor or county commission on historic homes.

Burke said that in the county's comprehensive plan there is a recommendation for a tax incentive for owning a designated historic home. He was uncertain what level that would need to be done and said that as soon as the zoning ordinance goes through, the commission can work on that. Tabb suggested that after a certain length of time it would be nice to phase out homes that have been contributing to the county's tax base for as long as his home has. He offered to testify or assist the commission going forward.

Bill Polk, the county Director of Maintenance, spoke about the courthouse windows on George Street. In the upcoming window rehabilitation project, the sills may be compromised if the storm windows are moved to the inside. He is afraid the frames will crumble. Lambert pointed out that the George Street side faces west and takes the most abuse. Right now, they are not sure how bad the damage to the sash is. Polk hopes that there may be more funds available if the courthouse is listed as a National Historic Landmark. Burke pointed out that as a National Register building, the county could apply for state development grants for restoration work. Polk said that while the landmarks commission would like to see the storm windows moved to the inside, he thinks the frames won't last more than three or four years. Burke said that sometimes restoration projects use an epoxy to repair old wood and that the commission would get back to him with possible solutions. Polk also showed

examples of pigeon spikes that were requested by the county commission to keep pigeons off the courthouse.

## **II. Minutes for December meeting – Submitted by Lauren Kelly**

Koonce moved to approve the minutes, Lambert seconded, and passed.

## **III. Treasurer’s Report– Hefestay**

The current account balance is approximately \$15,000. The treasurer was absent, so no report was approved.

### **a. FY-18 Budget Review – Discussion**

Burke noted we are about 6 months into the fiscal year. The landmarks commission receives about 3% of hotel/motel tax. It had planned for 2 audits, and the FY-16 audit is in process. The audit for FY-17 was budgeted, but will not take place until FY-18, so those funds will roll into the FY-19 budget. The commission now has \$2,400 to spend on something else. WV GeoExplorer is on the list of funds not yet expended for this fiscal year: \$4,000 this year that is not committed. The commission is still required to tear down the Eyler house on the Shepherdstown Battlefield. The new bid for asbestos abatement & demolition for the house is \$12,000. \$2,000 was granted by the SBPA and Burke will ask the Civil War Trust for a contribution. Burke is going before the county commission on Friday night to ask for \$5,000 of FY-19 funds because the landmarks commission’s budget can’t support the expense.

### **b. FY-19 Budget of priorities – Discussion**

The hotel/motel tax is based on tourism, and the trend is upwards. The estimate from Michelle Gordon is \$21,519. The landmarks commission must pay for insurance, two audits (one is a single audit, and so, more expensive), bookkeeping, and \$5,000 for the Eyler house demolition, so there will not be enough in the budget to take on another full-time AmeriCorps Member. There is a possibility the commission could budget for a part-time AmeriCorps Member. The commission’s archivist at Shepherd University is moving to Texas. The JCHLC archives are on deposit at SU Library and require fees for labor and archival supplies. He noted that if Charles Town expands the city boundaries the county Hotel/Motel tax revenues, and therefore the commission, will take a major hit. The county commission would have to change its percentage at the expense of Parks and Recreation. The JCHLC will vote on its budget in June, but the budget is going to the county as-is with the understanding that some numbers will change.

## **IV. Planning for 2018 – Discussion**

There are projects the commission can currently match funds to:

\*Financial management

\*Peter Burr Farm: The commission needs to renew its memorandum of understanding with Parks & Rec. They have built some trails, and the county is mowing the grass.

Master naturalists are taking it on as a project. The main house needs to be repainted.

This expense is not reflected in the budget because the Fairs & Festivals Grant will be used. This amount is \$4,750 for FY-18. The commission will add a grease trap in the kitchen, flatten the barn floor, and add safety railing in the barn.

\*Write a preservation easement for Snow Hill and put it on the market.

\*The commission has taken title to Duffields Depot as of last week and is accepting bids to remove the debris from the collapsed wood section.

\*The commission will continue to have projects at Shepherdstown & Summit Point battlefields.

## **V. Announcements and Reports**

### **a. Status of the WV GeoExplorer Project – Theriault**

After some false starts, Theriault has found someone to do a major revision and add new features to the site. This should cost \$3,000. He will have some money for additional features. The site is going to be a wiki but not open-edit. People who wish to work on it can get security permission. Theriault should have a proposal written before the next meeting. The goal is to make the program more user-friendly without diminishing its search capabilities. He estimates it will take 3-6 months to get the work done. The landmarks commission always allots funds for this project, and Theriault said there is always work to be done.

Theriault also pointed out an article in *Goldenseal* two years ago about the Women's Land Army as it functioned in WV. There was a branch at Media Farm. The MacDonalds built a separate home for the "farmerettes," and Theriault suggested updating Media's National Register nomination to reflect the importance of the structure.

Theriault also has materials at his home that he thinks the landmarks commission should curate.

### **b. Status of text amendment for Historic Preservation Zoning Ordinance – Burke**

Burke will present it to the county commission tomorrow at 1:45. Onoszko said they will keep the ordinance open until the next meeting, so they will probably vote on it March 1, though it is written in their agenda as possible action.

### **c. JC Courthouse Committee – Koonce**

The committee met two weeks ago. There was a request from Bill Polk & Patsy Noland for the landmarks commission to make a statement on the bollard. The committee doesn't want it replaced. Koonce will draft a letter for Burke, who said that if it must be reinstalled, it needs to be removable. The committee would prefer an alternative to spikes to take care of the pigeons, and Polk has researched the problem extensively and feels traps could be used instead of spikes. Jacki Shadle had questions about maintenance and donated paintings of

the courthouse to be framed. The committee has reached out to the new judge, though it is still uncertain who will be in the position in June.

**d. Status of *Wild Goose* NR nomination – Demer**

The nomination was approved at the state level in November. The federal officer, a landscape architect, wants more discussion of farming operations and landscape. Drafts have been going back and forth with Jeff Smith at the state office. This week's draft should be the last. Demer said it may be necessary to focus on architecture and leave out the farming operations because of a lack of documentation.

**e. Status of *Johnsontown Church* nomination as a JC Landmark – Demer**

Reverend Jerry Myers Johnson III approved the draft, but asked for some changes. Demer will have the nomination out this week, so the commission should be able to vote at the next meeting. In 1848, the first free black community in WV was founded in Johnsontown. The town originally had a log church. The cornerstone on the present church reads 1896. It has been an active church with an active cemetery for a long time, and there is now an annual homecoming in August since most of the community has relocated.

**f. Status of Rte. 340 – MOU with WVDOH – Horter**

Burke said the WVDOH may have to do some mitigation, trees or berms, around Wayside Farm because the new road will be very close to this National Register Eligible property. Property acquisition will start this year and will mean the demolition of the Rainbow Room, where Patsy Cline performed. The landmarks commission may want to document the structure before it is demolished.

**g. Status of preservation easement for Snow Hill/Poor Farm – Horter**

Burke said Horter should have a reviewable draft ready in the next two weeks.

**h. Status of interpretative projects – Kelly**

Marianne Davis at the Shepherdstown Visitors Center is speaking to her board about printing the 1862 Civil War driving tour. Kelly has been working on reformatting the tour so it is more affordable to print. When she has figured out a workable format, she will also reformat the 1864 driving tour and write another grant application to the Convention & Visitors Bureau, since the 1864 tour goes all over the county. Kelly has been working on a sign for the Coyle cemetery and will soon start working on a brochure for the Beeline March.

There was a large response to the announcement of the landmarks commission receiving Duffields Depot. The Stuart-Mosby Historical Society got in touch to say they are donating funds for some of the work that needs to be done and have

offered to speak at a lecture/panel discussion on Mosby's activities in Jefferson County. They suggest we charge admission and use the funds toward the depot.

Park Day at Shepherdstown Battlefield is coming up on April 7. Kelly is also working with Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Historic Town Foundation and the Preservation Alliance of WV on a separate project at First Zion church in Harpers Ferry. She attended a windows workshop and is planning an AmeriCorps work day at the site.

**i. Status of NR nomination – *The Rocks* – Kelly**

Kelly is working on this between projects and will have a draft done for a site visit with Jeff Smith from the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, which will take place either in March or when the Park Service schedules a site visit at the courthouse.

**j. Status of briefing statement on the JC Courthouse as a NHL – Kelly**

Kathryn Smith from the National Park Service said she would get back in touch in the next week or two with a timeframe. She said just the eligibility process takes months.

**k. Status of Duffield's Depot property transfer – Burke**

The commission took possession last week and is getting estimates to clear the site.

**l. Status of Eyler house asbestos abatement & demolition – Burke**

The landmarks commission is in fundraising mode to get the necessary \$12,000 for the work.

**m. Status of site reviews, JC Courthouse, & design for pull off on River Road – Lambert**

Lambert reviewed a small 6-8 lot subdivision on 51. Burke announced a major subdivision in preplanning at Belvedere, a National Register farm.

**VI. Assignment for next meeting**

**a. Review JCHLC Bylaws and prepare to discuss**

Some of the bylaws need to be slightly revised, like the notice to the public on meeting times.

Koonce moved to adjourn, Lambert seconded, and passed.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.