



Meeting Minutes
Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission
June 9, 2021
Jefferson County Commission Meeting Room
Charles Town, WV 25414

Members Present: Martin Burke (Chairman), Jack Hefestay (Treasurer), John Demer (Acting Secretary), Addison Reese.

Member Absent: H.S. Leigh Koonce (first absence since joining the Commission more than five years ago).

Visitor: Mr. Richard Zigler.

Mr. Burke called the meeting to order at 7:06.

Public Comment: No public comment was heard. Mr. Burke welcomed Mr. Zigler and invited him to speak when he wished.

Minutes of the April Meeting. Mr. Burke asked for comments or corrections to minutes of the meeting of April 14, 2021. There being none, **Mr. Hefestay moved the minutes be approved; Mrs. Reese seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Treasurer's Report: For June 9, 2021, Mr. Hefestay reported a balance of \$41,125.89, the figure including deposits of recent donations from two Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation endowment funds, the Katherine Burr Jackson Fund and the Peter Burr Farm Living History Fund. Mr. Hefestay said he reconciles the bank statement with his spreadsheet statement every month. Mrs. Reese said Mr. Hefestay should expect invoices from the company clearing the Boyd-Carter Cemetery. Mr. Hefestay said he tries to pay invoices when received. **Mr. Burke asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; Mrs. Reese so moved; Mr. Demer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

FY-22 Budget – Discussion and preliminary approval. Mr. Burke reminded that the JCHLC fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30, and that we are completing FY 2021. Mr. Burke estimates a carryover from FY 2021 to FY 2022 of \$40,151. Michelle Gordon, finance director for Jefferson County estimates the JCHLC will have income of \$18,901, derived from the Commission's share of the Hotel/Motel tax. Mr. Burke feels Ms. Gordon's estimate may be conservative because the West Virginia Legislature voted to tax AirBnBs that previously were untaxed. Another caution: the tax will come from the AirBnb Corporation, and it has yet to specify when and how the state will receive the tax. The JCHLC will get the Fairs and Festivals grant for FY-22 in the amount of \$4,753. Mr. Burke said the Peter Burr Farm bakers will generate about \$1,500 for the Commission, and he encouraged commissioners and others to support the bread baking. Mr. Burke estimates income for the coming fiscal year at \$65,305.

Against this income, Mr. Burke reminds that \$36,400 of the carryover must be set aside for carryover expenses, principally Route 340 mitigation and the Boyd Carter Cemetery project. Other proposed operational expenses forecast are insurance (\$1,900); FY20 and FY21 West Virginia State audits (\$350); such Commission office operational expenses as postage, post office box, design, and printing (\$1,000); supplies for JCHLC archives at Shepherd University (\$200); dues: National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (\$150), Preservation Association of West Virginia (\$200), National Trust for Historic Preservation (\$250), and Civil War Trails (\$200). Our contribution for an AmeriCorps volunteer will be \$6,000.

Proposed expenses for properties are: Shepherdstown Battlefield security, safety, and maintenance (\$500); Peter Burr Farm utilities, lawn maintenance, Arts and Crafts Festival (now held at Sam Michael's Park), and repointing the chimney (a total of \$6,000); and Duffields' Depot lawn maintenance, two dumpsters, and replacement of the main beam and two doors (a total of \$4,250). Finally for the Route 340 research project (\$12,000) and our contribution to the Jefferson County Historic Preservation Fund (\$1,500).

Total expenditures are forecast as \$34,500.

In addition we will recoup what we did not receive for our Hotel/Motel tax through the America Rescue Fund in an amount of between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Ms. Reese asked what we can expect from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Mr. Burke responded that Michelle Gordon cautioned about asking for too much money as the County Commission is careful about what it spends. Mr. Burke added that our principal revenue streams – Hotel/Motel Taxes – produced nearly nothing in the recent year because the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown has held no training and the Bavarian Inn has had a dramatic reduction in rooms rented. The Clarion Inn has shut down completely. The JCHLC is not part of the County line-item budget development. The JCHLC gets 2.94 percent of the Hotel/Motel tax. By state law 50 percent of the Hotel/Motel Tax goes to the county CVB – the Convention and Visitors Bureau. A remaining 46 percent goes to Parks and Recreation for their programs. We share the balance with the arts and humanities council. As stated earlier, our income from the Hotel/Motel Tax for the coming fiscal year is projected at \$18,901. Mr. Hefestay added that the Planning Commission, of which he is a member wasn't aware that the JCHLC gets any money for the Hotel/Motel Tax. Mr. Burke asked that we approve the budget as preliminary and reconsidered it for final approval at our meeting in August. **Motion: Mr. Hefestay moved that we approved the budget proposed as preliminary. Motion carried unanimously** with the condition, as Mr. Hefestay asked, that a final budget be presented in August.

Announcement and Reports

- A. **Jefferson County Courthouse Historic Landmark status.** Mr. Burke announced that approval of the Jefferson County Courthouse as a National Historic Landmark has been postponed until the review committee in Washington, DC, can meet (this summer or this fall). Mr. Hefestay asked about benefits of National Historic Landmark status. Mr. Burke said our courthouse would now be eligible for supplemental funding from a West Virginia fund set aside for courthouses, the Save America's Treasures funding. Mr. Hefestay asked if any improvements had been made, and Mr. Burke said he'd have to talk to Laura Kuhn.

B. **AmeriCorps Member.** JCHLC has been approved for AmeriCorps funding for FY 2022 for a 40-hour position. Mr. Burke recounted four previous AmeriCorps Members two with master degrees, and two with bachelor degrees. Mr. Burke encouraged those with bachelor degrees to use AmeriCorps subsidies to continue for master degrees. One went to the University of Vermont, the other to the University of Texas. Mr. Burke recommended the student at Texas continue for a doctorate. Mr. Hefestay recalled that years ago those with doctorates or masters played down or hid their advanced degrees to appear more employable and not overqualified.

C. **Website and other Social Media.** Mr. Burke and Ms. Reese agreed to look at the website with an eye to updates and corrections. Ms. Reese recommended a link where queries could be segregated and responded to. Ms. Reese said some questions arrive via Messenger and thus require a social media monitor to check yet another app. Mr. Burke said a new AmeriCorps Member will resume responsibility for social media in September 2021.

D. **Status of National Register and Jefferson County Landmark nominations.**

1. St. Paul's Baptist Church. Research and communications remain ongoing.
2. Route 340 project. *Wayside Farm* is an adamant no-go for a NR nomination or documentation. Owners do not want either. Maral Kalbian, then, is working on a history of the designated corridor and on an intensive resource study of *Glenwood*, a Jefferson County category 2 property. *Glenwood* has an unusual floor plan of interest to John Allen, who volunteered to examine the building. Owner of the *Glenwood* property, Dr. Noel Henderson, does not want a National Register nomination, but has approved Ms. Kalbian's research. By way of background, Mr. Burke said that West Virginia Highways granted the JCHLC \$50,000 to study the Route 340 corridor from where it becomes two lanes southwest of Charles Town to the Virginia state line. We thought we could treat the areas a historic district but we cannot because we lack full support of property owners along the route. Mr. Burke, Mr. Hefestay, and Ms. Reese stressed the importance of documenting the *Rainbow Room*, where Patsy Cline got her start and regularly performed. Mr. Burke hasn't heard from the Diocese of West Virginia on permission to study and include *St. John's Episcopal Church* in the corridor study. We were reminded of a clause in its deed allowing descendants of the property donor to reclaim the church property if the church ceased operations.
3. New project for John Demer. Mr. Burke assigned the Fairfax Grant Stock Farm to Mr. Demer as a high-priority project.

E. **Study of Concept Plan reviews and Zoning Changes.**

1. Road Runner Wrecker Service. Mr. Burke did not object to changes proposed.
2. Proposed cell towers along Berryville Pike. One tower is in an industrial zone that allows them. Verizon Wireless plans a 191-foot cell tower, just south of the Rainbow Room. Ms. Reese located a viewshed map that will assist in developing a Section 106 report. The second tower is proposed for a 174-foot tower at Wheatland Road.

3. Zoning Amendment for Jefferson Orchards/Miller Farm. Mssrs. Burke and Hefestay reported the project passed the County Commission by a 4-1 vote.
4. Wild Hill Solar Project. Extended discussion between JCHLC commissioners and Mr. Zigler on the hows, whys, and what-ifs of the solar project. In the most general terms, agricultural lands leased for solar farms will generate income for farmers to supplement their retirements without them being forced to sell their farms for housing developments. Solar farms will generate increased income for the county without the need for additional services such as schools.
5. Sheetz store at Route 340 and Augustine Avenue. No discussion occurred.

F. JCHLC Properties

1. Peter Burr Farm. Our bread bakers are in in full force baking bread. They generate about \$1,500 a year while interpreting a historic and popular craft. They bake the second Saturday of the month for six months.
2. Duffield's Depot. On June 9, the Harpers Ferry Civil War Roundtable hosted a lecture of Colonel John Mosby's Raid in 1864. Unfortunately the lecture conflicted with the JCHLC meeting. Patrick Shunney, general contractor continues work. He has cut and will install a new summer beam, dewater the basement, hang two doors, and do other related work. He will submit invoices as he finishes tasks.
3. Shepherdstown Battlefield. No new discussion.

G. Jefferson County Historic Preservation Fund.

1. Fund balance. Mr. Burke announced a new balance of \$74,000 and said that when the fund reaches \$80,000 another \$10,000 will be unlocked, and when the fund reaches \$90,000, yet another \$10,000 will be unlocked reaching the fund's initial goal of \$100,000. Mr. Burke has gotten commitments from Harpers Ferry, Charles Town, and Shepherdstown of annual contributions of \$1,500 each citing the value of the fund to historic structures in those municipalities.
2. Saving Jefferson County Historic Places Grants. Mr. Burke proposed a meeting among the major stakeholders – Charles Town, Ranson, Shepherdstown, Harpers Ferry, and Middleway – for some time in October to discuss guidelines and parameters for awarding grants. Initial grants would assist in such emergency mitigation as mold removal or repair of water damage. Because of limited initial funding base of \$100,000 grants for the first year will total about \$5,000. Those limited funds, however, could be used to match other grants from state or federal sources.
3. West Virginia tax credits for National Register properties. For FY2022 Mr. Burke proposed educating owners of National Register properties to the availability of tax credits for NR properties available from the state of West Virginia. Mr. Burke plans lectures to accomplish this goal.
4. The Mills Group. Mr. Burke announced that the Mills Group, West Virginia's most prominent preservation consulting firm, is establishing an office in Shepherdstown in the building formerly occupied by the Village Florist. Mr. Burke said Shepherdstown

needs a florist because as Mr. Hefestay quipped, both recent florists have “pulled up their roots, so to speak.”

Adjournment. There being no new business, **Mr. Burke moved, and Mr. Hefestay seconded, that the meeting be adjourned; vote unanimous.** Mr. Burke declared the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

John Demer

Acting Recording Secretary

Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission