



Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission
County Commission Room, Charles Town Library
Charles Town, WV
Minutes for February 14, 2024

Present:

Guests: Mr. James Newton; Dr. Will Vann

HLC Commissioners: Martin Burke (Chair); John Demer (Secretary); Jim King; Addison Reese.

AmeriCorps Member Jake Blackall. Excused absence Ray Benzinger (Treasurer);

Call to order: Mr. Burke called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

- I. Public Comments. Mr. Burke welcomed guests Jim Newton and Dr. Will Vann. Mr. Burke introduced commissioners and described work of the commission. Mr. Newton is interested in the commission's ongoing work at Duffields Depot and whether the van is still there. Mr. Burke explained the van is on a tiny parcel whose owner who lives in Cumberland, Maryland, has not indicated an interest in selling. Dr. Will Vann expressed an interest in Far Away Farm (James Osbourn Farm) and local history. He enjoys walking the Osbourn property.
- II. Approval of minutes for meeting on December 13, 2023. Ms. Reese asked for a correction; correction made. Motion to approve: Mr. King; second: Ms. Reese. *Approval unanimous.*
- III. Treasurer's Report. By memo, Mr. Benzinger reported that since December 13, 2023, income totaled \$5,677.37 and expenses were \$4,854.73. Current balance: \$32,595. All bills are paid as of this date. All JCHLC accounts are current and in order. Motion to approve: Mr. Demer; second: Ms. Reese. *Approval unanimous.*
Discussion of budget for FY 2025. Mr. Burke outlined projected income sources as \$26,000 from hotel/motel taxes, and \$30,00 to \$35,000 from three leases of the James Osbourn Farm, assuming a transfer from the American Battlefield Trust occurs soon. In FY 2024 the County allotted \$10,000 for inflationary costs. For the county budget call for FY 2025, Mr. Burke will ask for \$40,000 to hire a preservation assistant.
- IV. Jefferson County Courthouse National Historic Landmark celebration. The JC County Courthouse National Historic Landmark celebration will occur Saturday, April 13. The date coincides with the opening day of the Charles Town Farmer's Market and Blooms and Blossoms Event. The courthouse, and the courtroom specifically, where the miner's trial took place, will be open for tours starting at 10:30am. We will engage two bailiffs to open the building and to provide security. The presentation will occur at noon of a plaque from the National Park Service. This has been a six-year project of the Landmarks Commission to get the courthouse declared a National Historic Landmark.
- V. Convene Certified Local Government (CLG) to review and approve three National Register nominations. Mr. Burke cited the need for the JCHLC, a CLG, to review and approve National Register nominations for *Fairview/Rees Daniel Farm* and *Rosenberger/Brown Farm*. Mr. Burke and Mr. Demer briefly cited Agriculture and Architecture as Areas of Significance for both properties, and they highlighted historical features of each. Mr. Demer will present both

nominations to the West Virginia Archives and History Commission in Charleston February 21, 2024. Mr. Burke explained that Mark Schiavone and John Restaino will present their nomination for *Isaac Clymer Farm* to the Commission at its meeting in June 2024.

VI. Reports and announcements.

- a. Status of Website for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Mr. Blackall reported 4,439 total views on our Facebook page for 2023 and 1,125 views of our JCHLC homepage. Broken down further, 586 used our “History of Jefferson County” page, 304 our “County Landmarks,” and 303 our “National Register” properties.
- b. Status of Jefferson County cemetery projects. Ms. Reese reported conditions stable on Kearneysville Methodist Cemetery. At Rose Hill in Shepherdstown a huge tree top fell and broke an 1848 headstone. Ms. Reese completed grant applications for cemeteries in Middleway, Rose Hill, and Fairview. The Shepherdstown Historical Commission invited Ms. Reese to speak on African American burial grounds at the Byrd Center at Shepherd University on April 17. Mr. Burke discussed grant funding available through the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation.
- c. Status of National Register (NR) nominations. In addition to nominations already mentioned, Mr. Burke continues to work with Maral Kalbian on a nomination for *Straithmore*; a property owned by the late Nancy Stolipher, now awaiting settlement of her estate. Mr. Demer reported completing a draft of *Woodbyrne*, now in review. Mr. Blackall summarized a deed chain and social history of *Shenandoah Oaks*, a property he has prepared for a county nomination.
- e. Status of Concept Plan Reviews and Zoning Changes. Mr. King reported a proposed development near the Fruit Research Station that will require water connection from Berkeley County.
- f. JCHLC properties.
 1. *Peter Burr Farm.* Wayne Braunstein is not certain he can lead breadbaking this year for reasons of health. The Ranson Garden Club will develop and care for the kitchen garden.
 2. *Duffields Depot.* Mr. Burke still awaits approval from the WV Department of Highways for a \$66,000 grant that is an 80/20 match that will require supplemental funding from the County.
 3. *Shepherdstown Battlefield (James Osbourn Farm).* The JCHLC awaits transfer from the American Battlefield Trust. We continue to hope the transfer will occur soon.

Adjournment at 8:17pm. Motion to approve: Mr. Demer; second, Ms. Reese. *Approval unanimous.*

Respectfully submitted,

John Demer, Secretary