

JACKSON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Date: March 19, 2024								
Time Begin: 5:26 pm								
Time End: 6:20 pm								
Location: Jackson County Department on Aging, Heritage Room								
Members	Present	Absent		Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Susan Leveille	X		Jane Eastman	X		Michael Moore	X	
Bill Crawford		X	Luther Jones	X		<i>Vacant</i>		
Brandon Core		X	Pam Meister	X				
Celeste Pratt	X		Beth Parris	X				

Staff Present:

Anna Harkins, Planner I
 Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant III

Call to Order and Quorum Check

Chair Susan Leveille called the meeting to order at 5:26 p.m. and a quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Luther Jones approve the agenda with the additions to include September 19th and October 17th of 2023 sets of minutes that needed to also be approved. Michael Moore seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

- Luther Jones made a motion to approve the minutes from September 19, 2023. Beth Parris seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- Michael Moore made a motion to approve the minutes from October 17, 2023. Pam Meister seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
- Pam Meister made a motion to approve the minutes from November 28, 2023. Michael Moore seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment (3 minutes per speaker)

There were no public comments.

New Business

a) Staff Updates

Ms. Harkins stated staff did not have anything new to bring to the Commission but they wanted to get the group back together to discuss what we are wanting to accomplish this year. She mentioned the modernization of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and coming into compliance with G.S. Chapter 160D. In addition, she stated staff is still getting that through, and is working on it but staff has been really busy working on some other projects throughout the County, that have taken up a lot of our time. Ms. Harkins stated they are trying to navigate doing all of those things alongside trying to get in contact with all the

different municipalities to get on their agendas to then call public hearings for the ordinance update.

Ms. Harkins stated staff also wanted to talk about if the Commission wants to do Mountain Heritage Day again this year, and if we want to add any new things around the current curriculum that we did last year, which was that drive through Jackson County. She asked the Commission for input as staff would need to go ahead and start working on producing those materials soon. In addition, she stated Historic Upper Campus of Western Carolina University StoryMap project did really well with the intern, and we have been approached by the Public History department at Western Carolina University (WCU) to possibly have more people in the future. Therefore, if there is places or municipalities or even other project ideas that we could funnel some students towards as there are definitely people who are interested.

Ms. Harkins stated she went to speak to a WCU class last month for one of their Historic Preservation classes, and there is a lot of students who are doing a lot of really great research in the County and who really want more resources, which was one of the major things that they kept asking. In addition, she stated she is still getting emails from students asking; "I want to learn more about this building," and "Where do I go, I want to learn more about this building, how can I find more information?" There is a lot of interests with the WCU students about history, and we have not really heard many people interested in local designation yet. In addition, she stated they have not had any new people who might seem interested, so it is not like people are busting down the doors trying to do local designation, so we will get through the ordinance update when we do.

Ms. Harkins inquired from the Commission if they wanted to do Mountain Heritage Day again this year, and if so, do we want to use the same things that we used this past year? Or do we want to update or add new things? What are we wanting to do with that? So that way, staff can go ahead and start working on it, because it does sneak up on us a lot faster than you think it is already March.

Pam Meister stated we had a great experience this past year. Ms. Harkins stated we handed out more things than we ever have before, and they would have to do a reprint.

Jane Eastman inquired how mobile is the StoryMap? Ms. Harkins stated it is a digital thing, and it would just have to be on a screen. Ms. Eastman stated so it is not something we could just have like a laptop or something setup. Ms. Harkins stated we could, however she is thinking of the sun in our tent. In addition, she stated we could also have a QR code set up and people could scan the QR code, and then they could just have it on their phone as they go. That could also be an option; it would be a really fun thing to have StoryMap wise, because we are on campus. Ms. Eastman stated she did not know if anyone would want to walk around those buildings after just having walked around that whole field. Ms. Harkins stated we could definitely highlight it in some way, and is hoping that we will be able to also have another intern working on another StoryMap in the fall as well since that program worked out really well. Now WCU has a digital public history class where they are teaching students how to do StoryMaps specifically, and if students want to do one of those for their capstone internship, they already have some experience making those maps.

Ms. Meister stated being one of the booth sitters, people seem to be very interested in knowing which historic buildings they could actually go into, and wondered if there was not an opportunity there for the handful of ones that actually are open. In addition, she stated they could maybe use it as an opportunity to hand out if they have brochures or stuff like that, for the Appalachian Women's Museum and the Jarrett House. Ms. Meister stated they could also say you can go into the historic house that is the Chamber of Commerce or the Cashiers Historical Society as a response as that was a regular question is when they are open.

Ms. Meister inquired what was going on with the Dillsboro Historical Society. Ms. Parris stated the mistake she made was having to start it in the winter, because the Mildred's were not on-board with that. After Easter, the Mildred's are going to get together and tell me when they can do that, they are really excited, lots of changes in Dillsboro of course with the Jarrett House. In addition, she stated they have a new director at the Appalachian Women's Museum who she has been in touch with named Rebekkah Watkins. The Appalachian Women's Museum has had one event, the Town is very much interested in doing some more events down there in that area, and they will start through the grant project, clearing the walkways, she believes it is the mountains to the coast. Ms. Parris stated after Easter they are all going to get together, lots of people and one joining in is Fay Dietz she does the Parris Cemetery and Keener Cemetery and her family grew up in Dillsboro. In addition, she stated she just took out the old books from the church and started going through that, which helped a lot, and we are hoping to get started in the spring, and it would be a spring and summer project because a lot of people do not get out in the wintertime at all. Ms. Meister stated if that group has any desire to have a handout of what they are up to or something like that as the booth could become a place that could be a showcase. Ms. Parris stated the Dillsboro Historical Society is the closest thing to a museum that we have, and to get more public going there would be great.

Ms. Harkins inquired if Ms. Parris knew if there is somebody over there permanently working on Historical Society, as she has not heard any other updates. Ms. Parris stated Brandon Core has been working on that, they have had some more volunteers and they are like the Genealogical Society just being across which is a great place to go. In addition, she stated she liked that idea of knowing what is open and what is not. Ms. Parris stated we desperately need a bigger Museum in Jackson County.

Ms. Parris stated the Balsam Mountain Inn is really trying and active. Ms. Meister stated the jams are definitely still going, and last she heard they were trying to open some rooms for overnight stays. Ms. Harkins stated she does have a contact there, and she can ask and see if they have any updated information on when they are open that we could hand out and see if that might be something they would be interested in.

Ms. Parris stated if it helps with Mountain Heritage Day, we are separated into districts we could go and ask those places if they had any information or any updates and we could bring it back to staff. Ms. Harkins stated that would be super helpful, because if some of those areas do not have a brochure, but they have something else that they would like to showcase, she believes that we could probably find enough space for that instead of doing the drive through Jackson County with the posters like we did this past year. In addition, she stated the booth could just be a showcase of National Register sites that you can go and visit right now, because most of our coloring pages that we have are of those sites that you can go into and are open to the public. Ms. Harkins stated we could attempt to do the Jarrett House coloring page now that the exterior is almost done, she may be able to make one if we think that could be an option if we are going to be showcasing some that might be opened by then.

Ms. Leveille stated she believed it would be very helpful to have those kinds of places for people to go visit, and suggested to print them on different color paper so that people do not pick up three of the same thing, and it could be things that were cut in half or brochure size, etc. In addition, she stated then they can pick up the ones that they are interested in and go from there. Ms. Leveille stated homes are not open, so we are looking at places that are open. Ms. Parris stated or sites like Judaculla Rock, or other places. Ms. Pratt stated the Glenville history, she does not know if they call it a museum, but it is right there by the marina in Glenville. Ms. Meister stated she believed they do call it a museum, and they are seasonal but they could be opened.

Ms. Harkins replied to Ms. Leveille's comment regarding speaking up and stopping people throughout the festival. She stated they had a couple of students from a historic preservation class two years ago, and they put in some hours to get extra credit. In addition, she stated we stuck those girls out in the middle of the walkway, having them stop people, and they did a great job. Ms. Harkins stated maybe if the classes work out to where we might have a professor who would be willing to give extra credit for some volunteer hours, that might be another great option, because the students have always been great. In addition, she stated our intern this past year did a great job pulling people in, and really got out there because he was a tour guide for campus.

Ms. Harkins stated so it is a yes for Mountain Heritage Day, and we will start moving forward with making a list of sites that we are wanting to grab some information about. In addition, she would look into if we might have the ability to do one more coloring page and have that one be the Jarrett House because that was on the posters and people were asking if it was open yet, and wanted more information.

Ms. Leveille stated she liked the idea of having a computer there. Ms. Harkins stated we would have to look into that and what that would look like because it would have to be public facing, and we would have to figure out how to keep it charged.

Ms. Leveille mentioned she read in the newspaper, about an auction for Sylva Supply, and she was unsure if it had happened or if it was upcoming. Ms. Kelley stated that it started this week, and it was an online auction where you can bid online the link to find it was included in the article in the paper and she could send out a direct link if the Commission wanted it.

Ms. Leveille stated we lost the dam, and there are things that that happened there that touch the whole community, and she thought that was pretty cool, but pretty awful at the same time because some of that needs to stay together. In addition, she stated everybody that was interested caught that, and that is just fine.

Ms. Pratt inquired if she could ask a question, considering what is on your plate and your staffing, what is a realistic timeline for getting the ordinance on the different jurisdictions agendas? Ms. Harkins stated she is hoping we can do this over the summer. In addition, we are supposed to be wrapping up one of our projects in July, and if we can have everything lined up by then we could slide into that in the fall, and that is what we are working towards. Ms. Pratt inquired so it is on hold until that project finishes in July? Ms. Harkins stated it is not on hold, we can definitely start having those conversations, but it is just trying to find the timing to do all of that.

Mr. Jones stated he has noticed that in the past several times we have met, we have a vacant seat, which seat is that. Ms. Kelley stated that is Forest Hills. Mr. Jones stated is that something we want to pursue getting represent from Forest Hills, or do we want to say, one less person means that it is easier to meet our quorum? Ms. Harkins stated we have reached out to Forest Hills, and they do know about the vacancy. In addition, she stated we could ask again, if they have found somebody because they have adopted the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, and they are a part of it in our local agreement, and they do have their spot. Ms. Harkins stated we can definitely reach out to them and see if they want to put somebody in the spot.

b) Chair and Vice Chair Discussion

Ms. Leveille stated some of you know that her life has changed quite a bit, her husband is in a memory care facility now, and she thinks that this group will get a lot more attention if there is somebody else in the chair seat. In addition, she stated maybe we could come to some agreements on who might be willing to take that position at the next meeting.

Ms. Leveille stated she thinks people needs time to think about it and whether they have time that they could devote to it or if you feel that somebody else in the group needs to have their arm twisted or whatever, but I just need to let it go to somebody else.

Ms. Harkins stated currently, we do have a vice chair, which is Beth Parris. In addition, she stated if you wanted to hand it off, or keep it, it has been a while since the topic of chair and vice chair has been discussed and we wanted to have that conversation if people want to move spots around, or if people want to stay where they are at. Ms. Harkins stated we wanted to have this conversation since Ms. Leveille is wanting to step down. Ms. Leveille stated she intends to stay on the committee.

Ms. Harkins stated the whole point of having a chair is mainly going through and leading the meeting, and also communicating with staff if there is anything that they would like to be added to the agenda. In addition, she stated anybody could ask if we can add something to the agenda. Usually, we check with the chair before and say is there anything that you think we need to do or have you been talking to anybody, and will they be there to lead the meeting. The vice chair is the substitute chair, so if the chair is unable to be there the vice chair leads the meeting.

Ms. Leveille stated she thinks that someone can put some more hours into the chair position. In addition, having worked with some other groups it is very nice for the chair not to also be responsible for taking minutes, which she did in one of the organizations she volunteered for and having staff that really does have time that they devote to the projects. She stated she sees our role is advising what needs to be done, and asked if anybody had any thoughts on the responsibilities or what they wish would happen.

Ms. Eastman inquired if there was a written description of the position duties. Ms. Harkins that is probably in the bylaws, and would have to go back and check and see what the most recent adopted bylaws say and go through that, and we can send out that information of the rules and duties for chair and vice chair, and next month we can consider a nomination and vote on it. Mr. Jones stated he suggested putting on the agenda of the next meeting, choosing the chair and vice chair.

Ms. Leveille inquired if anybody had anything else that they want us to talk about right now. In addition, she inquired if we had any suggestions about other places, buildings that need to be added to our consideration.

Ms. Harkins stated she had not received anything recently, mainly it has just been questions from students who are doing research or from people who are traveling through who are trying to find somebody's cemetery, which she directs them to Bill at the Geological Society. In addition, she stated she has not really been getting anything specific about certain buildings or sites for preservation purposes.

Ms. Pratt stated she had a good news update that the Sylva Main Street Association has received a verbal approval of a grant from the Jackson County Arts Council to restore the mural on the side of the C.J. Harris building.

Ms. Leveille stated somebody told her in its current state that if you view it when it is raining, then it does something to the paint, the bricks, or whatever and you can see it better when there is a lot of moisture in the air. In addition, she stated she had not tried that, and that was great and hopes that all happens and is done well. Ms. Pratt stated she thought it was a good example of the different organizations in our County working together working.

Ms. Parris inquired where the bathrooms were going. Mr. Jones stated it is going where the old train station depot use to be. In addition, he stated they tore out the concrete platform that was there from the old train station, and they hit some dirt which they could not

use and they had to take that out. In addition, he stated back whenever they built that they filled it with something that was mostly sand, which you cannot build foundations into and so they are fixing it. Mr. Jones stated the color of it is going to be basically a battleship Gray, and the all the trim work, doors and everything at this point in time is probably going to be green. Old train stations for Southern Railway almost invariably done green paints on the trim, and sometimes they use gray or a light yellowish brown but they decided to go with the with the gray.

Ms. Leveille asked if anyone has been documenting the buildings on 107 before they have been torn down? In addition, she stated we should of have had that visual of what that looked like before it got changed so drastically, and did not know whether the Sylva Herald has done any of that. Ms. Leveille stated we probably should have gotten it to happen. Mr. Jones stated that could be a project down the line collecting photographs and things like that. In addition, he stated that old building that was sitting right there were 107 connects to Asheville Highway. Ms. Leveille clarified the Ensley's Grocery Store building. Mr. Jones stated yes, that is why you had the loading dock there for bags of feed and stuff. Ms. Leveille stated there was a pot bellied stove right in the middle of the store. Mr. Jones stated he knows there are pictures of that, he is unsure exactly where they are and he believes that the Sylva Herald put a picture of that building before they tore that one down. Ms. Harkins stated staff went into that space before they tore it down and did have photographs taken, and those are included within our database. In addition, she stated the stove was gone, but we were able to get photographs of all the different facades and that was one of those that was brought to our attention and it was considered a little more historic than some of the other ones. In addition, that was one of the first buildings torn down which was close to about three years ago.

Ms. Leveille inquired if there were other historic buildings that are in the way? In addition, she stated it is not as old but the quonset hut Roberson supply building has been there for ever and ever. Now, you can see the Quonset hut beyond the façade, does that mean that it was built after 45? Ms. Harkins stated she can take a look and see if there is anything that has been picked up on surveys that might be in the line of the project, and if so, as staff, we could just run out and take a couple of photographs and put them in a file in our database. Ms. Leveille stated that she thinks that would I think that would be good for us to have because she does not know what this Main street Sylva used to look like in 1913 and there might be snapshots of this and that. Mr. Jones stated that might actually be something for a display at Mountain Heritage Day, that these are the things we are losing because of expansion, and there are certain things we can save and certain things we can't save, and it is our job to try to save the things that we can.

Ms. Leveille stated we had brought up the subject of doing a book and decided at least at this point in time, we were going to have to put that aside. In addition, she stated she brought this book about a little town in New Hampshire, Harrisville, and it has been a textile mill town since 17 something. In addition, she stated they have all kinds of wonderful historical things, but they are presented in fun, more poppy graphics. Ms. Leveille stated she knows the man, and when he was at Harvard he really did not like their attitude about business and he dropped out. He was more interested in people and the last textile mill was closing and he decided that that could not happen, since there had been textiles there since whenever. In addition, she stated he and his father went together, bought some of the old buildings that were still there and started a wool yarn production. Ms. Leveille stated he came in and spent a couple of nights with us, and he had an environmental impact study he wanted all of the wires to be underground and he eventually got that done like we did on Main Street in Sylva and she remembers how awful that use to look. In addition, she stated this was a

little bit more playful presentation than some of the ones that we had looked at from other towns, and it just struck her as an option. She stated she has shared with people things about the paper mill in the tannery, and they are like, are you kidding me? For instance, people did not get paid money, they got paid in script and it was what was done at the time, but we would have a rebellion in this country if it was like that today. Ms. Leveille stated she thought that the Commission might be interested in flipping through that and seeing this book, and they got some public funds and some private funds to do the production of it. In addition, she stated it is a beautiful little old town, and they are using up to date spinning equipment and they are buying wool from farms that behave and care about the ecology and all of that, and it is a very interesting approach to preserving the history. Ms. Leveille stated you walk in some of the buildings in there and everything was water powered, and there are these wheels and bands that are 40 inches wide that run them and we do not have much down here like that to look at, and it was very fascinating see all of that. In addition, they use those buildings for offices or whatever and one of his sons is taking over that business now and is more of today's generation and he wants not only the water power to be used again but solar.

Adjournment:

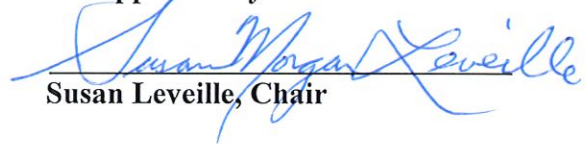
With no further business, Luther Jones made a motion to adjourn. Michael Moore seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Allison Kelley, Administrative Assistant

Approved by:



Susan Leveille, Chair

